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LETTERS

OF A

MAMELUKE;

OR A

MORAL AND CRITICAL PICTURE

OF THE

MANNERS OF PARIS.

WITH NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

JOSEPH LAVALLÉE,

OF THE PHILOTECHNIC SOCIETY, &c. &c. &c.

VOL. II.

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LETTERS

OF

A MAMELUKE.

LETTER XV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE French attach no small importance to the Coat, and, in general, Europe participates with them. more or less, in this folly. They are the first, in acknowledging such an absurdity, to laugh at it. They know extremely well that a well-dressed man is sometimes very little worthy of esteem, and that a man of merit is frequently concealed under a sorry garb. One of their poets

acquired a high reputation by a piece in verse, entitled, *Epistle to my Coat.* If they are speaking of any one whose honesty they call in question, they will say: "That man has, perhaps, nothing in his "favour but his appearance." In a word, they have no defect which they admit with more frankness than this one: but what signifies that? they never will correct themselves.

Before the revolution, this country for the richness of clothes was carried to an excess really extraordinary; at the present day it is scarcely less, although the style of dress among men, as well as that among women, has assumed a character totally different. I assure thee that certain personages, if they chose to be sincere, would acknowledge that the First Consul stands as high in their esteem for having revived the fashion of embroidered suits, as he stands in that of the greater part of the nation for the splendour of his

his victories, for the benefits of peace, and for the wisdom of his administration. Under the old government, in Paris especially, it formed a real study to be initiated in, to know whether such a dress was *decent* for entering such a house: what was the colour, the stuff, the ruffles, the collar, the stockings, the shoes, the hat, the sword, and the head dress necessary to be worn, in order to be admitted to such a table. The military uniform, that costume of heroes, that livery of honour, was not *decent*; for decent was the magical term, the Medusa's head which petrified, at the door of every house, the man unacquainted with the etiquette of dress, and permitted him not to cross the threshold. The uniform served for farewel visits, and those paid on returning to Paris; with this exception, it was failing in every propriety to wear it; and many a woman, many a mother, to whom no intrigue,

no slip, no solicitation, no pecuniary sacrifice, no suppleness, would have appeared amiss, to obtain her husband or her son a regiment, would have felt themselves extremely affronted, had that son or that husband sat down twice in succession to their table in the uniform of this very regiment. They were ashamed of the coat, but not of the manner in which, frequently, the right of wearing it had been acquired. Had any stoic ventured to violate those great precepts of dress, had he committed the unpardonable crime of confounding, by his ruffles, the order of the seasons, though he had been Turenne, or Voltaire, a freezing coldness would have spread over the countenance of the mistress of the house. The preceptor would have taken care to caution his pupil not to bow to him; the footmen looked down on him from the pinnacle of their insolence; the lap-dog would not

not have accepted a scrap from his hand, he was a man not to be re-admitted; he wore muslin ruffles. This man, not to be re-admitted, had sometimes the good sense to render to those *originals* the service of overlooking their absurdities; he ended by taming them with his good qualities or his talents: esteem and friendship, in the long run, banished etiquette; for the French have an innate sentiment of justice which floats always on their brilliant frivolities. If he stood firm, they ended by loving him; they overcame the difficulty by whispering to their acquaintance of a similar description; "He is fantastical, he dresses ill, "but he is a gentlemanly man."

Formerly, these fooleries sometimes gave rise to scenes somewhat pleasant. A duke and peer, a man, in other respects, to be commended, and whose taste for the arts rendered him at once dear to enlightened people, and useful to his

country, assembled, every week, at his house, on a fixed day, all the men that Paris then possessed of distinguished merit in every kind of talents. These evening-parties were delightful; drawing, reading, and music, were the principal amusements, which were succeeded by a magnificent supper, and sometimes the supper was followed by a ball. Every thing that the arts produced during these evenings entered into the duke's collection; and he annually rewarded the authors of those productions by presents which the custom of making new year's gifts permitted him to offer to them without wounding their delicacy. One day a celebrated draughtsman was presented to him; his name was Palmerius or Palmiris. Whether it was the whimsicality of the artist or his poverty perhaps, the dress of this man, who possessed eminent abilities however, was no less grotesque than neglected: his linen

was

was dirty; his shoes covered with mud; and his wig looked as if it had never been combed: he had on a shabby pair of breeches, patched at the knees; he wore black stockings, a circumstance which, at that time, was reckoned a great want of respect. Whether he really was not worth a coat, or whether it was a mere caprice on his part, certain it is that on that day he wore none: he was simply clad in an old waistcoat with sleeves, made of what had once been white damask with crimson flowers, and enriched by a broad lace whose remains alone were just perceptible. In short, over all this, whether for the purpose of keeping himself warm, or of concealing this ridiculous attire, he wore a scarlet cloak, quite thread-bare, and the colour of which was perfectly faded. It may be conceived what a singular figure this man appeared. As long as he remained in the drawing-room, little notice was

taken of him; the artists knew his whimsical turn of mind, and the duke, on his part, was too much of a philosopher to attach any importance to the manner in which a man was dressed. But, at supper, it was another thing. I need not tell thee that, in the house of a duke and peer of France, the number of livery-servants was considerable; at that time, the room was crowded with footmen as long as the repast lasted: greatness required that this should be the custom. Nevertheless, woe be to the guest who, among persons of that rank, had not a servant of his own to wait on him. Owing to the insolence of the servants of noblemen, he frequently ran a risk of dying with hunger, and with thirst above all; for it was not then customary, as it is at present, to put the bottles and glasses on the table. But to return to the subject. Supper being announced, the company went into the

the eating-room. Every one took his seat, and poor Palmiris, like the rest, with his old cloak. The horde of lackies, immediately perceiving the originality of his dress, leagued together to pretend not to hear whenever he asked for a plate or called for drink. As for a clean plate, he made no difficulty in dispensing with one; it was of little consequence to Palmiris to eat several viands on the same; but to dispense with drink was neither his intention nor his custom. He therefore called for wine—nothing! wine—nothing! wine—all the footmen were deaf! The company was too numerous, and the duke too much engaged in doing the honours of his table, for any one to perceive the impertinence of these livery-servants. When Palmiris, by his calls, equally repeated and useless, had convinced himself that this deafness was a real conspiracy, what did he do? He rose from

table. Such a movement, in the midst of a ceremonious supper, was well calculated, no doubt, to draw on him the eyes of all the company: no matter, he was not abashed, but went straight to the sideboard, took a large china mug which came in his way, laid hold of a bottle of wine, emptied the whole of its contents into the mug, took it up, and carrying it to the table, resumed his seat, and, without disconcerting himself, took a hearty draught out of this large mug. The company burst out a laughing, and, as it was just, the laugh was in his favour. The duke, indignant, gave his servants a very severe reprimand, ordered one of them to stand behind the chair of Palmiris, and enjoined him, under penalty of being discharged, to be always at his command whenever he should come to his house to supper.

This scene is only farcical; but it was fortunate for Palmiris that he had to do with

with a nobleman who overlooked his dress in favour of his merit. At some other houses, the dress and the manner of quenching his thirst would have been thought very disrespectful, and the behaviour of the servants very proper.

How are they to be corrected of this folly? When a scholar has satisfied his masters, learned his lesson properly, and conducted himself in a rational manner during the whole day, the French do not say to him: "I promise you, as a "reward, that the first time we meet a "beggar you shall give him alms;" they do not say to him: "I promise you that "I will permit you, on such a day, not "to go to the play, in order that you "may visit such an infirm old man, and "carry to him six francs which I will "add to your pocket-money;" but they say to him: "You have been a good "boy, and you shall therefore have a "fine coat." Hence the little master

sets his brain to work, calculates, combines, and at length concludes, that a fine coat is the *ne plus ultra* of happiness; and the appearance of the first well-dressed fool that he sees at his mother's will induce him to run and whisper to her: "That gentleman has been "very good, mamma; he has a very fine "coat." Follow up this first conclusion drawn by the child, and see whither it leads him. Dost thou wish for the reverse of the question? If the child has committed some fault: "Let wooden "shoes, a worsted cap, and a coarse cloth "jacket, be brought for that naughty "urchin; that's the way in which good-"for-nothing people are dressed, Sir." Now, answer me, what will the child think whenever he sees a man in wooden shoes? He will say to himself: "That's "the way in which good-for-nothing "people are dressed." Judge of the justness of the arguments which such a cor-

correction will have suggested to his mind, especially when the spectacle that he has constantly before his eyes will incessantly serve to confirm this first notion. When he sees an honest man, ill clad, raising with a timid hand the knocker of his father's door; the porter, with his hat on his head, asking him rudely: "Whom do you want?" The valet-de-chambre, lolling in an elbow-chair, saying to him without rising: "What's the matter? My master is "not at leisure, wait;" the dog barking at him for an hour without being silenced; in a word, when he sees his father appear, survey this unfortunate man with a look of self-importance, make a sign to his secretary to receive his petition, and in a dry tone say to him: "Begone, I will cast my eye over it." The child will say in a whisper: "This "is the way in which good-for-nothing "people are dressed." Perhaps at such a time

a time of life his father had said the same thing; and thou see'st the manner in which he receives the man with wooden shoes! Now, Giafar, thou knowest the source of this great respect for fine clothes. Boursault, in his *Esope a la cour*, in having opened before Crœsus the chest in which the Phrygian, become prime minister, had preserved the spoils of his former wretchedness; and Voltaire, in his *Nanine*, by the distinguished reception which poor Philippe Humbert receives from Comte d'Olban, have given them on this subject a good lesson. They feel it, and applaud it warmly. Propose to them, on coming from a representation of the piece, to admit a Philippe Humbert to their table, they will beg to be excused.

This prejudice is so general that if, by chance and from time to time, a contrary example happens to form an exception, it is quoted as a miracle, a pheno-

phenomenon, an act of eminent virtue. Under the reign of Louis XV. a period when absurdities of this kind were carried to an excess which it would be difficult to conceive; a poor officer lived in a remote corner of a southern province, at the distance of a hundred and fifty leagues from court. He had formerly belonged to the life-guards, but had retired from the service fifty years, and, being grown old, he experienced the wants which his age every day rendered more sensible, as his sole resource consisted of a trifling pension of six hundred francs. He had written a hundred times, perhaps, to the Minister, in order to represent to him his deplorable situation; but all to no purpose, for he received no answer. He at length lost all patience, and, availing himself of a state of health still pretty vigorous, notwithstanding he had attained the age of eighty, he set out on foot, and bent his way

way towards Paris, with a few crowns in his pocket which he had saved up. Without any accident, he at last arrived at Versailles. Thou mayest imagine that his dress was not overstudied; it bespoke cleanliness and nothing more. Fifty years absence rendered him a stranger to Versailles; he made inquiry, and found his way to the war-office. At that time the Duke de Choiseul was minister; and M. de Saint Paul, chief clerk. He presented himself at the office of the latter, and was ushered into his private room. At his venerable aspect, M. de Saint Paul himself drew an arm-chair, made him sit down, and asked him the motive of his visit. The affair was neither long to explain, nor difficult to justify; and the chief clerk had only the trouble to cast his eye on the register. "This very morning, "Sir," said M. de Saint Paul, "I will "state your request to the Duke de "Choi-

" Choiseul. I intreat you to be so good " as to make your appearance to-mor- " row at one o'clock at his audience. " I experience but one regret, that is " not to have authority to settle your " business myself." The old man was punctual to the appointment. No sooner did M. de Choiseul perceive him than he came up to him, saying: " Sir, " I have informed the king of your ser- " vices: he creates you a knight of the " order of St. Louis, and grants you a " pension of two thousand four hun- " dred livres. I anndunce to you that " the first year is this day expired: here's " an order for you to receive the money " at the public treasury. I hope that " you will do me the favour to dine with " me to-day." Dost thou know, Giafar, what, in all this, occupied, in a super- lative degree, both the court and the town? Thou wilt, perhaps, imagine that it was the extraordinary journey of

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an old man who, in spite of his eighty years, was able to walk a distance of one hundred and fifty leagues, or else the noble and expeditious behaviour of the minister and his chief clerk, or, lastly, the justice and generosity of the monarch?—Yes, truly, that would be a most natural supposition. But the sublime, unheard-of, admirable, incredible, inconceivable part of the story is, that M. de Saint Paul had offered the old officer a chair, and that M. de Choiseul had made him dine on his right hand, in a cloth coat. Saint Paul who presented to him a chair! 'tis divine! He dined at the duke's in a cloth coat! 'tis charming. Good-night, Giafar.

LETTER XVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

FEW nations had more quickness in repartee, more conciseness in their replies, more archness, more sense in their words than the French. In antiquity are to be found a thousand examples of generals haranguing their armies with energy and eloquence, provided, however, that those harangues be not the fruit of the imagination of historians. In France, four words are not unfrequently sufficient for their generals to inflame every mind, to impose silence on murmurs, and command victory. In the late war, a discontented soldier shewed Bonaparte his coat, entirely worn out, the tatters of which scarcely covered him, and asked him for a new one with no small degree of ill-humour. "*A*

"*new*

" *new coat!*" replied the general; " *you* " *don't think of such a thing: people* " *would not see your wounds.*" Antiquity affords no parallel of such an answer.

Before the revolution, all their infantry was dressed in white; one corps alone of grenadiers had a blue uniform. In a battle a white regiment was going to charge: the officer, who commanded it, addressed to his men these words only: " *Whites, the blues are looking at you*;" and the victory was decided in their favour.

During the war of the revolution, General Perignon commanded the French army against the Spaniards. At the moment of giving battle, he said, " Sol- " diers, there are the Walloon Guards " before you: they are reckoned the " best troops in Europe: what will be " said of you who are going to beat " them?" And they were beaten.

A repre-

A representative of the people, whose mind was subject to prepossessions, or who was perhaps, hurried away from the dictates of his reason by the inconsiderate opinions too prevalent in a tempestuous crisis, sent a written order to the same general to put such an officer under arrest, because, said the order, that officer is an *aristocrate*. General Perignon instantly answered him; "I inform "you, citizen representative, that the "officer whom you order me to arrest "as an *aristocrate*, was killed yesterday, "fighting for liberty." What sense in this answer! It comprehends every thing.

I could quote to thee a thousand examples of similar conciseness, all characteristic of extraordinary depth of judgment. Sometimes the French speak as Tacitus wrote, or their own Montesquieu.

More than any other nation, they are singu-

singularly addicted to duelling. This is a great misfortune, for duelling is an atrocious thing. A vast number of writers have attacked this scourge: their philosophers, their moralists have examined it in every point of view; they have sought its origin, its principles, and its causes, they have painted its fatal effects in the blackest colours; all the weapons of wisdom have been sharpened to combat and overthrow it. More than once the French government directed against it the most severe ordinances. The ordinance the most certain against duelling would be an ordinance which should prohibit Frenchmen from exercising their wit.

Duelling is atrocious, I repeat it; but, I prophecy it with regret, duelling will never be extirpated in France. They fight, say they, to avenge their offended honour; this is a mere pretext, out of a hundred duels, ninety-nine have no other

ther motive than a witty sally or a repartee. The sally makes the auditors ugh; and if the repartee is gay, live-, and strikingly pointed, all of a sudden the laughers change sides. Here hen is a victory lost at the very moment hen one party was beginning to enjoy . Thou sees't that there is not a shaow of injury in all this; but, nevertheless, a great wound inflicted on self-ove.

Who doubts that, if the sole object f duelling was to repel a gross expresion, means would be found to make hem understand reason in regard to uch absurd conduct? They would be ensible that a word dropped in anger or ntoxication, that the turn of a phrase requently imbibed in a bad education, hat the custom of some coarse epithet ontracted in the licentiousness of a amp, are not worth the trouble of arming men against each other. But how

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is it possible, with the importance which they attach to the advantage of shining by wit, to make them understand that they ought to pardon him who snatches from them the fading laurel of a good saying, of a witty sally, of an ill-meant joke? He is a cruel enemy whose just and keen repartee suddenly draws on him all the attention which was just before bestowed on a pleasant sally. The more finesse the two champions have exerted in the attack and in the defence, the more inevitable is the duel.

Two young ladies extremely pretty, both daughters to physicians, arrived, the one after the other, at a ball. The first occasioned a great sensation. A flattering murmur attested and celebrated her beauty. A moment after, the second appeared, and admiration changed its object. A young man said in a jest, "This medicine will make us bring up "the other." The auditors laughed.

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The lover of the first rejoined: " I " doubt it, a medicine without bleeding " has no effect." On this, they left the ball-room to settle the point by a duel.

A deformed man was in the pit. At that time there were no seats, and often there was a great pressure in this part of the house. His next neighbour said to him in a bantering tone: " Your emi- " nence incommodes me greatly." This word, having a double meaning, excited laughter. " I beg you a thousand par- " dons, Sir, rejoined the humpback, I " am in despair at not being as flat as " yourself." The laugh increased, and the parties settled the matter by a duel.

Anecdotes of this nature are endless. In what way do they expose honour? Probity suspected, courage called in question, insincerity reproached, these, methinks, are the points in which ho-

nour is interested. But never, or very seldom at least, does a duel among them originate in a similar motive. Their politeness forbids this. The rage for duelling therefore is founded on the rage for displaying wit. That fondness for a play on words, that absurd *penchant* for epigram, that continual thirst for shining, the humiliation of being thrown into the second rank in such a contest, the unavoidable susceptibility thence resulting from it: this is what puts arms into their hands, and for one victim claimed by honour, there are a thousand sacrificed to pleasantry, almost always insignificant, and not unfrequently destitute of common sense.

Is this then what may be called wit? But, in endeavouring to correct them, in length of time, of this abuse, by an education which might make them insensibly lose the taste and tradition of it, would not a check be given to that vivacity

city of imagination, the inexhaustible source of those expressions so concise, so happy, and so deep, a few examples of which I quoted to thee at the beginning of this letter? Not more than the style of parody is a check to the noble dramatic art. What are, in fact, those wretched quibbles, that ridiculous play on words, those expressions with a double meaning, the occasion of so many duels, except the deplorable caricature of those sublime speeches, the occasion of so much heroism? They are to the latter what the pitiful gleam of a squib is to the majestic brilliancy of lightning.

It is therefore falsely that their inclination for duelling is attributed to a particular sentiment of honour. Undoubtedly, we must do them the justice to admit that the feeling sentiment of real honour is more irritable and more refined among them than among any other na-

tion; but here, when we are desirous to know the sum of honour which every man possesses, he, certainly, does not include in the account the number of duels he has fought. The French attach honour to bravery in battles, to fidelity in oaths, to integrity in employments, to scrupulous exactness in duties: there is their honour, or at least that on which they pride themselves, which inflates their vanity, and of which they make their boast with a joy that almost resembles pride. But let them fight, there is not a single one of them who, in the grief of his soul, does not exclaim: "Detestable honour!" They therefore feel that honour lies not in this? Yes, no doubt, they feel it: they murmur not against honour, but against the shame of not being able to be superior to their petty vanity humbled by a pitiful jest, by a flat *equivoque* which they have not repelled at the moment their

their malignity wished, and they sacrifice their life, because, to their fancy, they have not had wit enough, or because their rival has had too much. I repeat it, out of a hundred duels, there are ninety-nine *a la St. Foix**.

It is equally an error to affirm that duelling is the vestige of Gothic manners. Duels of that nature, which were formerly called judgments of God, the execrable monuments of a barbarous legislation, have not, and cannot have left traces among an enlightened people, engag-

* The duel here alluded to originated in the following manner. At the hour of dinner, an officer of the king's life-guards was taking a cup of coffee, diluted with milk, in a coffee-house in Paris, frequented by M. DE ST. FOIX, when the latter exclaimed: "There's a devilish "poor dinner!" Having often repeated this expression, the officer at length remonstrated. "You will not," said ST. FOIX, "prevent me "from saying that a cup of coffee, diluted with "milk, is a devilish poor dinner." High words arose; they went out and fought. M. DE ST.

engaging by character, and just by sentiment. Were one to say at this day to a Frenchman of the least information: "A crime has been committed: two "men impute it to each other: the tri- "bunal, in doubt, has ordained that "those two men should fight. God "will decide: the vanquished will be the "delinquent, and it is he who will be "sent to execution." That Frenchman would answer: "The tribunal is "composed of madmen; they must be "sent to a mad-house." It, therefore,

Foix, wounded as he was, still repeated, "You "will never persuade me that a cup of coffee, "diluted with milk, is not a devilish poor din- "ner." The next morning the two combatants were brought before the Dean of the Marshals of France. "My Lord," said M. de St. Foix, "I did not intend to insult the officer of the "king's life-guards; I look on him as a brave "and polite gentleman; but your greatness will "not prevent me from saying that a cup of cof- "fee, diluted with milk, is a devilish poor din- "ner."—*Note of the Translator.*

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is not true that, in manners and customs, there remains any trace of this law, since the light of reason is alone sufficient to demonstrate it as senseless to a man of the smallest penetration. It is the same with such a law as with that of torture; once abolished, there remains no impression of it on national habits.

Thou wilt, perhaps, imagine that it is in imitation of some other nation that they have adopted the fatal rage for duelling, and that, being naturally enthusiasts, they have in this, as in every thing else, carried imitation to excess. That is not the truth: not only no nation of antiquity was acquainted with duelling; but also if it has been introduced among a few modern nations of Europe, it is merely because they were desirous to do what was done in France. Foreigners practise duelling much in the same manner as they wear a coat, a hat,

and boots of such a fashion; all to be in the French style: this is the fashion. Therefore, in duelling, the French are not imitators; they are originals, and are imitated.

But, in short, wilt thou say, since it is not in the sentiment of real honour, since it is not in a remnant of attachment to ancient laws, since it is not in the example of nations, either famous for their courage, or bordering on their frontiers, that they imbibe this inclination for duelling, where then is the source of the scourge? I have told thee; in an unfortunate abuse of speech, in the fatal importance which they attach to the most fleeting kind of glory, that of shining by wit at the expense of their friends, at the expense of their own repose, at the expense even of their reason. Private duels are not more founded on honour than judicial duels were founded on justice. Whatever

shades

shades may be assumed by this abuse of wit, it is always the same in its results. In the time of chivalry, they fought not to defend, but to excite the interest of their mistress. One madman came and said to another madman: " I maintain " that my lady is more beautiful than " yours." In consequence, battle, bruises, bumps, thrusts, and sometimes death; and those ladies, so beautiful, were frequently no more than the ladies of their imagination, whom neither the one nor the other had ever beheld. This they called gallantry. Thus, if they fight at the present day to prove that their epigram is better than that of their enemy, they fought then to affirm that the dream of their imagination was prettier than the dream of their rival. In the interval of the two periods another madness occurred; they fought for the sole pleasure of fighting: neither chivalry, nor mistress, nor honour, nor

a play on words was the question; the question was to fight. That was all. One giddy fellow met another, and said to him: "I have a wish to try my skill "against yours," much in the same manner as we say to any one: "I have "a wish to make acquaintance with "you." Thou wilt imagine, perhaps, that this giddy fellow spoke only for himself? Not at all: he went to his friend, and said to him: "I am going "to fight with such a one; he brings "with him such and such persons, will "you be my second?"—"With all my "heart." Would one not say that this was arranging the matter as if it was a mere dinner-party? Thus, at that period, without beauties to be upheld, without honour tarnished, without particular hatred, without any reason but the puerile boasting to make a display of address, a dozen of men, more or less, went out to cut each other's throat.

And

And to give thee an idea of the madness of public opinion, know that, if the person provoked and his seconds refused, they were dishonoured. Quote to them the spectacles of the gladiators of ancient Rome, they will answer, "Barba-"rism:" the bull-fighters of Spain; "barbarism:" the boxers of England; "barbarism."—"Speak to me," they will say, "of the mild manners of "France." Very well; but, with these mild manners of France, a man, on rising from his bed, is not sure whether he will finish the day without killing or being killed in all the rules of honour, or whether he will not be disgraced in all the rules of good breeding for not having wished to kill or be killed. And by whom killed? By an unknown or an indifferent person, by a man against whom hatred never animated him, by a companion, a friend, and sometimes by a near relation. Or else by whom dis-

graced? By a world which frequently you do not esteem; by societies which neither visit you, nor are of your acquaintance, nor seek it; which would neither partake with you their alliance, nor their purse, nor their pleasures; alike insensible to your reverses and to your successes; which you will never find either when you want consolation, services, or esteem; to which your antagonist is as indifferent, and as unknown as yourself, and which neither think of pronouncing your name and of concerning themselves about your existence but in order to condemn you to infamy on the faith of a prejudice no less silly than barbarous, no less extravagant than murderous. And this is a chapter of those mild manners.

Oh! I confess it, my heart is oppressed, my hair stands on end with indignation when I chance to stumble on that luxury of education displayed in the pro-

programmas of their seminaries of instruction. What pompous promises of attention prepared for the pupils! How vigilant an eye is to be kept on the purity of their mind! How they are to be formed for religious virtues! How they are to be fashioned to urbanity, politeness, sweet pity, tender beneficence, and sacred humanity! With the rising generation the golden age then will certainly issue from this asylum! And what precautions to preserve entire the important depository of human knowledge! There, will be professors of history, poetry, mathematics, physics, ancient and modern languages. And what besides? Professors of all the agreeable arts, painting, music, and dancing. And what besides? A FENCING-MASTER. A fencing-master! Cannibals! And what do you wish to do with such a master? Horrible comparison! A master of history to teach them to detest the outrages of

of the human species, and a fencing-master to inspire them with the thirst of the greatest that can be committed! A professor of poetry to initiate them in the language of the gods, and a fencing-master to teach them the art of putting to death their finest work. Professors of physics to unveil to them all the laws of nature, and a fencing-master to embolden them to violate the most sacred of them! Professors to unite them to men of every climate by a familiar acquaintance with the language of every nation, and a fencing-master to teach them to deal out death for an insignificant word! Professors of all those divine arts whose beneficent charm tempers the ferocity natural to man, and a fencing-master to instruct them to establish on murder the effervescence of passions frequently the most shameful! And this, however, is the progress of that civilization of which they are so proud!

A severe

A severe punishment would be inflicted on the imprudent apothecary who should sell, pell-mell, poisons and balsams; and the law is silent in regard to the school-master who puts up to auction the poison of duelling with the balsams of science.

But the soldier—Why do you mention the soldier? What a difference! For him fencing has at least an object of utility: one day he will fight man to man the enemy of your country; suffer him to increase his skill in order to repel that enemy; and, since he is to be your rampart, allow him the means of rendering it still more impregnable.—But he will, in like manner, take an unfair advantage of his knowledge of that fatal art against his comrades, his friends, and his fellow-citizens.—That may be, unfortunately. No doubt the soldier, boorish from his nature, rude in his manners, rough by character, by profession, and by

mock duel, to accustom their arm, their hand, and their eye to discern the place the most favourable for causing death to penetrate rapidly into the bosom of their fellow-creature; on the one hand, to charge the law to disgrace the man who fights, and, on the other, to charge public opinion to disgrace him who does not fight, is, of all inconsistencies, of all contradictions, the most inconceivable, the most disgusting, and the example of which would not be found elsewhere. Caligula said: "If you wear not to-day "mourning for Drusilla, you will be "guilty of high-treason, because she "was the sister of your emperor; if "you wear to-day mourning for Dru-"silla, you will be guilty of high-trea-"son, because it is the anniversary of "my exaltation to the empire." Thou seest then, Giafar, that they reason on duelling as Caligula did on mourning.

It

It will neither be declamations, nor books, nor laws, which will succeed in curing the French of the rage for duelling. What then will succeed? Thou wouldst not believe it, Giafar; it will be the women, as soon as they are firmly bent on it: they are powerful legislators. At no time, in France, has the legislator rightly known of what utility their assistance might be. They must first create politeness; a woman surrounded by unpolite men is a rose in the midst of thistles; not that politeness of chivalry, the offspring of servitude and tiresomeness; not that politeness of the age of Lewis XIV., always more bordering on etiquette than sentiment; not that politeness of the time of Lewis XV., which was no more than the language of the Graces spoken by libertinism; but that happy mixture of attention and deference, of civilities and delicacy, of respect, ease, and bashfulness; a species of politeness

politeness unfortunately so foreig
youths of the present day, so wel
lated, however, if they understoc
interests, to add a charm to th
tural amiableness; a politeness
which a man aspires in vain to el
the sole ornament, as well as t
excuse for the absurdities of
This first victory being gained, th
duelling would become less d
The women must next condes
convince themselves that the
which they suffer to break ou
a husband, a brother, a lover, ar
to fight, only inflame the r
duelling. Vanity always reasons
man will attach glory to shewing
superior to those alarms; he wil
them merely not to be suspe
weakness, or else he will figure

quering, or they will fascinate his imagination with the dreams of hope, and make him conceive a delightful enjoyment in dispelling them on his return. Thus, he will go and fight either to gratify the petty pride of not giving way to the fears of a woman, or in order to give the lie to those uneasy sensations by the triumph which he hopes to obtain, or to husband for himself, in drying up the tears of which he fancies himself the object, a pleasure that he would not relish but for the quarrel which he is going to determine. Let the women, as the just appreciators of bravery, reserve their smiles for the heroes of their country's battles, and let them try indifference for the heroes of duelling; let them sufficiently feel their dignity, the power of their charms, the power above all of their virtues, not to suffer the man who accompanies them to suppose that they are under his protection, that they do not think

think themselves sufficiently secure by the respect which is due to them, that they stand in need of a defender, of a knight, of a champion; and let them not, by this species of abasement, so destructive to their empire, give birth to the insolent desire, not only of defending them, but of being reckoned to have defended them; formed as they are to be admitted every where, let them not make it a consideration to occupy such a place in a country-dance, at a ball, at a public place, or at table; and let their esteem be for the man who honours them where they happen to be, and not for him whose foppishness tends only to honour himself, by disputing about a place for them; endued with an instinct more delicate, a discernment more acute, a taste more exquisite, let them applaud none but ingenious words, amiable expressions, light, witty, and polite pleasantries, the imperceptible and charming

charming links which decorum employs to unite individuals in society, and which may be compared to those garlands employed by the Loves for grouping together the Graces and Sports; let them disdain in their adorers those words whose double edge inflicts a wound, those equivocal phrases whose tartness courts the bitterness of repartee, those sorry puns whose foolishness provokes around them the insult of yawning, and end by holding out a hostile aspect to the man whose company is tiresome. Fewer pretensions, more politeness for the fame of women and the interest of men; wit, and no jargon; amiableness and no affectation; dignity and no arrogance; ease and no familiarity; in short, a civil manner, and no assuming airs; thus, and by degrees, the sources of duelling will be dried up; it will take refuge in the corrupted classes, and then will fall under the cognizance of the law.

But

But I am speaking to thee, Giafar, as if they were to hear me: excuse me; they have received me well enough for me to dream sometimes of their happiness.

LETTER XVII.

" GESID, Paris enchants you," aid to me lately a man sixty years of ge; " how great then would have been your fascination had you inhabited it twenty years ago! It was at that time a terrestrial paradise, the abode of the gods, the asylum of every pleasure, the temple of all the arts, the rendezvous of Europe, the country of the universe!"—" You inspire me with regret: Paris, as I see it at the present day, seems to me the wonder of the world; and I hardly conceive"... Pshaw! there's no comparison."—' Were there at that time more places ' of public amusement?"—" No; much ' fewer."—" Did people play, sing, or ' dance more?"—" No; much less."—' Were there more pictures to be seen? ' Were there more celebrated painters

" and sculptors? Were there a greater " number of productions of the arts?" —" No; much fewer."—" Were the " public walks more magnificent and " more frequented? Was the Botanical " Garden more rich? The Thuilleries " more handsome?"—" No; much less." —" But then I don't well understand"... " No; I tell you, there's no resemblance. " Whoever has not seen ancient Paris " has seen nothing: ten thousand coaches " more; fifty thousand lackies, running " footmen, and coachmen, with whis- " kers, muffs, nosegays, devils, cabrio- " lets, mousquetaires, French guards, a " parliament, a noise! a tumult! an up- " roar! It was charming!"—" That may " be; but".... " And then there were " dinners and suppers; a man, a little " known in society, was sure then, twice " a day, the gratifications of the table " would be repeated for him; but at the " present time what stinginess! People

", dine

" dine at six; this is very fortunate for
" the finances of those who keep house;
" but for their guests!"... " No doubt
" the gratifications of the table may be
" considered as something among those
" of life; but it seems to me that there
" is tiresomeness enough for one day in
" the ceremony of a grand dinner."—
" Are you jesting? Without etiquette,
" without ceremony, is there any happi-
" ness, any enjoyment? It is very evi-
" dent that you have no idea of the
" Paris which I regret. What magnifi-
" cence! what grandeur! what dignity
" in those repasts which you will never
" see, and which I shall not see any
" more! What charms! what amuse-
" ments!"—"The company then laughed
" a great deal?"—" For shame then!
" Did people laugh in good company!
" They smiled.... with the lips some-
" times."—" Zounds! I should have
" liked to know the enchanting pas-

" times of those men who never laughed;
" that must have been very gay."—
" Admirable, I tell you: I wish that time
" still existed! You would know Paris;
" and, for my part, I should enjoy that."
—" It is above all, as it appears to me,
" the conversation, the visits, the socie-
" ties, the grand entertainments that you
" regret: give me then, if possible, a
" few notions of all these, in order that
" I may judge of them by comparison."
—" Ah! my dear Mameluke, what ac-
" count could approach the reality!
" Conversations! witty, amusing, in-
" structive; a word on one thing, two
" on another; nothing heavy, nothing
" pedantic; by fits and starts; a yes, a
" no. What weather is it? What news?
" And how do you do? It was charm-
" ing! The visits! Twenty calls in an
" evening, a person was four or five hours
" in his carriage: no one was at home;
" it was admirable! And the suppers!

" You

" You were invited a week, a fortnight,
" a month beforehand. You said in
" public, I am to sup with Marshal this,
" and Count t'other. This had its ad-
" vantage: the world judges of you by
" the company you keep. Were you
" invited to the house of such a duchess!
" Well, at seven o'clock the duchess
" began her toilet: here was an occupa-
" tion till ten; and what dress! A hoop
" four yards in width, a robe shining
" with gold and silver, a hundred thou-
" sand crowns worth of diamonds, a high
" head-dress, and feathers! but, ah!
" such feathers! At ten o'clock she en-
" tered her drawing-room; no one was
" yet arrived; she was alone. What a
" pleasure! Presently a valet-de-cham-
" bre opened the two folding doors.
" Hem! *Madame la Princesse* such a
" one, *Madame la Viscontesse*, &c. They
" came in: then the salutations; then
" chairs were brought. You come from

" the opera?"—" No; from Versailles"—
" 'Tis horrible weather"—" Your gown
" superb"—The two folding-doors again.
" His eminence *Monseigneur le Cardinal*
" such a one. *M. le Grand Bailli de la*
" *Morée.* The company rise, and bow.
" Another interruption. Again the so-
" norous voice of the groom of the
" chambers. *Monsieur & Madame* such
" a one. Mind, these people are from
" the country; nothing but one folding-
" door. It is delightful; one is scarcely
" seated, before a new name is announced,
" a new gratification. *M. le Vicomte* such
" a one, *Madame le Vidame* such a one.
" What perfume! what elegance! what
" enchanting dresses! what jewels! what
" trinkets! The company had risen, they
" again take their seats. Do you con-
" ceive this movement, this agitation,
" this variety? Never any languor, never
" any *ennui.* Another person is an-
" nounced: *M. le Duc:* increase of
" plea-

" pleasure; 'tis the master of the house" —" And he is announced"—" Undoubt- " edly; 'tis at his wife's"—" Ha! ha!" —" It is half past eleven o'clock; all the " company are arrived; the parties are " now formed. Do you hear this en- " chanting murmur? No burst of laugh- " ter; the *ton* of good company: ' *Le* " *quinola à la bonne!*' 'Tis engaging! " Elsewhere: " Will you have a card?"— " Turn up"—" Fifteen"—" There, a bad " take-in"—" What signifies it? I mark" —" Two cards"—" Capot."—At a fur- " ther table: " Two tricks"—" How many " honours, Madam?"—" None."—It is " midnight; the maître d'hôtel appears: " *Madame la Duchesse est servie.* Every " one rises: the gentlemen hand out the " ladies, they cross five anti-chambers, " and at length arrive at the eating- " room. A hundred wax candles! the " richest service of plate. The com- " pany sit down to table; you have no

" knowledge of your neighbour; 'tis " excellent! nothing is so engaging as " novelty. Supper is over; the com- " pany return to the drawing-room in " the same order; the parties are finished. " It is two o'clock: the company de- " part, they call for their servants, they " get into their carriages, and they drive " home to go to bed. What a delight- " ful evening! Do the gods amuse them- " selves more?"—" Since you say so, " this may be very amusing; but I con- " fess"...." Bah! you cannot form a " judgment of the thing; your Egyp- " tian manners and ours"..." But I think " that, in point of pleasure, every man " can form a judgment"—" By no means; " you are not a Frenchman"—" That " implies that the French frequently " substitute to pleasure the idea of hav- " ing enjoyed some."—" Well! what sig- " nifies it? To amuse one's self, or fancy " that one amuses one's self, is it not

" the

"the same thing?"—"Very well; but "when people make for themselves plea- "sures of this sort, do they not like- "wise make for themselves sometimes "tedious and insipid hours, as if by pre- "vious agreement?"

This reflection displeased him, and he left me: it was, nevertheless, true. Ask that crowd of *petits-maîtres*, and pretty women, with whom Paris is thronged, if they have not agreed to consider as tedious and insipid all the pleasures we owe to nature, to sentiment, and to the cultivation of the mind. Talk to them of the charms that are relished in the country; of the enjoyment that is felt at the sight of the workmen to whom we procure a livelihood; at the aspect of the harvest from which the inhabitants of a village expect their subsistence; of the prosperity of the trades that you established; of the cabin of the poor man, which has been repaired by your assist-

ance: tell them that it is pleasant to rest under the shade of the tree you have planted; to cast your smiling looks over the landscape enriched by your flocks and herds; to converse with the plain-spoken man, whose laborious spade fertilizes your gardens; to visit sometimes the grave of your ancestors, in order to bring your virtues on a level with theirs: tell them that the moments which a father spends with his children are delightful; that the conversations of a married couple are enchanting; that those entertainments to which the voice of relationship, tender friendship, and amiable confidence, invite persons of all ages, attune all hearts, confound all wishes: happy day, in which the name of relation is no more than the name of brother; in which the mother and the young bride seem to be nearly of the same age; in which the grandfather and the child in the cradle quench their thirst out of the same goblet;

let; in which the respect of domestic intercourse is concealed under the grateful effusions of the heart! "Mortally "tiresome," will they answer; "'tis insi- "pidity itself! A carriage, horses, horse- "races, jockies, balls, the opera, routs, "the *bouillote*, *Frascati*, the *Bois de Bou- "logne*, the *Opéra Buffa*, and *Tivoli*, "there lies supreme happiness, the sweet- "est employment of time, the pleasure "excelling every other!" Try to believe them, mix in those amusements which they vaunt with so much enthusiasm; examine them, observe them; study well the state of their soul, of their heart, of their mind, in those moments of rapturous enjoyment; or even do not give yourself so much trouble; remark only how they laugh, and you will see how much they are overwhelmed by weariness. Singular men! Men to be pitied, who seem to cultivate roses only to crown disgust with them! My old gen-

tleman of sixty was one of these men; the youths of the present day are also of the same stamp, and their children will likewise be of a similar description.

The beaux of the day would find the amusements of the beaux of former times very absurd; their sons will form the same contrast with them. All of them, however, have thought, think, and will think, that they have excelled in *ton*. The *bon ton* of the day is, nevertheless, the reverse of the *bon ton* of former times: both must, therefore, be bad. No; for neither have had but the *ton* which they wished to have. When they say *bon ton*, you must translate it caprice; the whole is to understand their language. I have seen the routs and parties of the present day; they bear no resemblance to those regretted by the old man of whom I have been speaking. Every thing is changed, decorations, illuminations,

luminations, furniture: wax-candles are still in use; but to these are added lamps whose focus is enormous, and whose lustre is tempered by a covering of gauze in the shape of a balloon. This recalls to mind the manner in which the palaces are lighted in a certain country inhabited by flying men; a charming country created by the imagination of one of their writers of romance, where the two sexes, gifted with the finest eyes in the world, have received them from nature only to express love, and not to bear the light; and where, consequently, reigns an eternal darkness. These lamps, covered with a gauze, whose transparent veil leaves the light to be divined, much in the same manner as the gauze with which their women are covered permits their charms to be fancied, are multiplied with profusion: sometimes they decorate the chimnies, and sometimes they are placed in candelabras, as in the

atrium

atrium of the palaces of antiquity; here they shine on brackets of the age of Leo X.; there they display the brilliancy of the crystals of the English-fashioned lustres suspended to the ceiling. In the *boudoirs*, other manners, other customs; the lights are deposited in vases of alabaster. They think there is an air of mystery in that light which is only doubtful: as, they say, it is suitable to love. Is there not an air of mystery too in the dome of a bower? Is it not also suitable to love? However, one can see in such places. But, perhaps, they are in the right to cherish this obscurity in their *boudoirs*; is it not to their belles much more than to love that it is suitable? I know not; but this species of dying light chills me more than it inspires me; it is cold like the alabaster on which it is placed; it gives to all these *boudoirs* the paleness of the grave. Why not? They are frequently the grave of virtue.

Gold

Gold and silver brocades, India damask, rich painted cloths, the silky papers woven by the industrious Chinese, no longer cover the walls of their houses. The French possess a manufactory to be met with in no other country, where is made tapestry, the magnificence of which is envied by other nations. Thou wouldst, perhaps, imagine that they employ it? That would be natural enough; there would even be a sort of pride in displaying even to prodigality the productions of an industry which they are certain cannot be equalled by any nation; there would at least be justice in encouraging, by frequent purchases, the skilful artists and intelligent workmen whose talents support an establishment which is so nearly allied to the national fame. But reason! for shame! 'tis fit for the vulgar herd of other countries: the French are the gods of the earth; would it be decorous that they should debase them-

themselves to such a degree as to follow reason? Plain paper, those are the hangings in vogue at this day; and as the French are the gayest people on earth, the present fashion requires that the colour of this paper should be of the tinge the most dismal. This, for instance, is as it ought to be; for it is right that the fashion should always be in contradiction to common sense. In other respects, there is in this, my dear Giafar, perhaps, a little political coquetry; as, in their drawing-rooms, the women in their turn shew like tapestry on the real tapestry itself; the more dismal the ground, the more relief does it afford to the lustre of their attractions. They judge of themselves by the bronzes, whose gilding is more resplendent on an embroidered hanging. Seek not elsewhere than in this coquetry of the women the dislike to the superb Gobelin tapestry. The beauty of the figures which

which it represents, the clearness of the sky, the freshness of the landscapes, of the trees, of the flowers, would eclipse the women: and, compared to the interest of their self-love, what is that of a manufacture whose productions would enrich the ſtate? If the petty vanity of the female sex causes certain branches of industry to flourish in France, there are many also which it irrevocably ſtifles. But what nonsense! The women are always in the right; and a man must be a Visigoth at least to doubt it.

The old furniture has, in like manner, disappeared: for this they are indebted to taste, to the arts, to their fine conquests in Italy, and to their expedition to Egypt, which brought them more particularly acquainted with the beautiful vestiges of antiquity; thanks even to their revolution, on which the names dear to Greece and to Rome re-appeared to encourage, console, and advise sages

and

and heroes, and to inspire the frivolous class with a desire to be acquainted, not with their virtues, but their furniture; still this is something. No more of those arm-chairs with their cumbersome and clumsy wood carved and gilt; no more ceilings, chimnies, stands, and tables, with their tasteless and crowded ornaments of the reign of Lewis XV.: Athens and the Capitol have changed all this. How simple and majestic is that table! Is it not the one on which Plato wrote his treatise on the immortality of the soul? With what grace that little lap-dog receives on it choice morsels from the hand of that pretty woman! No matter, 'tis still the table of Plato: Is not this the name of the little dog? Was not Papirius seated on that seat when he refused to sell to the caresses of his mother the secret of the Senate? That tribune who occupies it will be less austere: that woman who is listening to him,

him, however, is not his mother. What enchanting compliment has that young man just paid to that lady? She smiles with complaisance; and I smile too! "You are lying," said he to her, "on "the sopha of Aspasia:" she little suspects that he said to her an insolent thing. How graceful are the sphynxes that support that bed: but what business have they there? The use of that bed, however, is an enigma to no person.

The company arrive: 'tis one of those parties distinguished by the absurd appellation of *à thé:* all Paris is there. What tiresomeness on the countenance of those women!

And, indeed, by what strange fashion have they taken the fancy to be at this day all seated by the side of one another? A suite of ten rooms is thrown open, sparkling with light; few servants in the antichambers: no one is at present announced; you enter, you go away when

you please, how you please, and with whom you please. Those young men are standing up: they admire themselves; first themselves, for a long time themselves, and always themselves: but for this why so many looking-glasses? They come, go, move about from room to room, two, three, four abreast, arm in arm. They speak little; they pronounce less: to hear them talk one would think them from Crotona; but by their discourse they are Sybarites: to move their tongue is too much fatigue; almost mute, they think, no doubt: this is their secret, and they keep it. The company have just applauded! What? A sonata on the harp. No one spoke, it is true; but no one listened, either men or women: Why not the women? Because the performer is a woman, and pretty. And the men? Because she is pretty, and a woman.

But a slight murmur is heard in the assembly.

assembly. These words: 'Tis he! 'tis he! fly from mouth to mouth. "'Tis "he! 'tis he! Who then?"—"Don't "you know? The prince of poets, "M. Beauvoisis, the Aristophanes of the "day." He bows; the company return his salutation; he must be an admirable man. It is a piece in three acts that he is going to read. He was not punctual to his time: he is confused, vexed, he says; but he dined at the house of a great man; a dinner that lasted a long time; his coachman is dying, his carriage overturned and broken to pieces, a terrible accident—"Is it possible?"—"On honour. This is a cruel augury; "I dare not read. Shall I read? No, "indeed, I am timid; you would not "believe it; but my repeated success has "not yet banished my fears: this was "exactly the case with Moliere."——"Repeated success, Sir!" says a young man, pulling up his cravat above his chin—

chin—Fifty voices immediately re-echo the words, and the tumult of joy reigns throughout the assembly. If, unfortunately, a second interruption had taken place, the poet, the coachman, the carriage, the piece in three acts, the timidity, and the repeated success, all would have been forgotten. He has recovered himself, and taken his seat. The little table, the pair of wax candles, the sugared water, every thing is ready: the circle is formed. Those who are in the hindmost ranks cannot see: no embarrassment; the young men, thus circumstanced, mount on chairs; such is the politeness approved of the present day. "*Hush! hush!*" is the word, and silence prevails: the precious manuscript is opened. The poet, for some seconds, surveys the auditors with a look expressive of kindness and protection. He is going to read; he coughs, he blows his nose, he reads. He read on for a long time,

I re-

I remember it well, Giafar. At the end of every act, all the women exclaimed, "delightful! delightful!" and all the men, "charming! charming!" Were they right or wrong! All I know is, that the next day these acts, so *delightful* and so *charming*, were unmercifully hissed at the theatre. This was a pity; it made a break in the repeated success of the author.

Next arrived a famous singer. This was a new constellation; he was surrounded, squeezed, and entreated. He will not sing. Why? Because he was requested to sing. After supper he will sing. Why? Because he will no longer be requested. The supper is served up. It is called supper; this is pleasant, it is more a breakfast, since all the clocks have struck one. All the viands are cold: they denominate this repast an *ambigu*. The women alone are seated at table; the men stand behind to wait on

on them: but they are the most negligent and inattentive of waiters; they think only of themselves, and are solely employed in eating. Fortunately for the ladies, a few gallant old men, by their refined assiduities, make amends for the indifference of the young ones. A little ridicule is thrown on this gallantry, and the youths laugh; not because it is displayed by the grey-headed, but because such politeness is no longer in fashion. The women, however, are the worse for it; and it is their own fault if they are not the better. Let them determine on it, and the young men will be polite. These supper-parties would be more agreeable; let them think of this. The orchestra strikes up a country-dance: the company rise from table, and the ball begins.

Thou seest, Giafar, that there is no comparison to be made between the supper-parties of former times spoken of by

by my old gentleman and those of the present day. The latter have also their little moments of *ennui*, their little constraints, their little absurdities; but, in short, it is not always play, fastidious, unmerciful play: let who will lose his money, decorum at least does not require that it should be lost. The agreeable arts sometimes find their way into these parties; and for the man who possesses a certain share of good sense, all the time spent in them is not without profit. A little more education, and these supper-parties would be preferable to those of the period so much vaunted. Good night, Giafar.

LETTER XVIII.

IF the French are acquainted w
jealousy, it has nothing at least of t
dismal rage of that of the nations
Asia, and is never treacherous like t
of the Italians. Not unfrequentl
lover here is jealous of his mistr
through vanity, perhaps a little throu
silliness. It is merely in order that t
world may perceive he is beloved by M
demoiselle such a one. His jealousy
not a passion; it is a confidence whi
his self-love makes to the public of t
preference shewn him by a pretty w
man. After marriage, the jealousy o
husband is rather an act of sovereig
than a sentiment. With the excepti
of those little shades which the opini
that they are naturally inclined to h
of their merit leads to their attachmen
there is no nation that reasons more
tiona

onally on the true character which the es woven by love ought to possess. his is the only nation that sincerely inks and honestly admits that those es ought to be founded on esteem: this the only nation that permits friendship succeed to love without a quarrel, and es it happen without chagrin and with- it bitterness. This chapter of their anners is one of those which is best lculated to do them honour: it is a rt of philosophy which a nation can- ot attain if its members, in general, ossess not a noble mind and an honest eart. The French are acquainted with l the fire of love; they love with ar- our, with violence even, sometimes with onstancy; but it is infinitely rare that is passion degrades them, and bewilders em sufficiently to make them forget e dignity of man. Nothing more ommon when they are married than to

hear them jest about the risks whi
husband runs, and affect, (laughing a
same time,) the pretended alarms
which that title inspires them.
would be a bad observer who should
this for indifference: no, it is the
dence of the tranquillity of their m
it is a homage which they pay to the
licacy of their friends, and to the
desty of their wives. In this respect,
human species in France is more
proved than elsewhere. Here the
men, in general, are more jealous t
the men: this speaks also in favou
the esteem due to the French. In e
country where man has descended to
indignities of jealousy, of whom are
women to be jealous? Are not the
their tyrants? In France, on the c
trary, this jealousy of the women i
attribute of their empire; they are
lous by right of power: it is friends,

haps even subjects that they wish to preserve, much more than husbands or lovers that they are afraid to lose. Thou must, according to this idea, Giafar, be sensible that little fits of jealousy among the French are almost always likely to have a comic *dénouement*. Out of a hundred thousand anecdotes, I shall quote the following:

One of their celebrated artists, M. B——, (and I chuse this anecdote in preference, because all the men who are connected with the arts are those whose head is commonly the most exalted,) M. B——, I say, had been for eighteen months the happy husband of a lovely young woman. She was but twenty, and united talents to the charms of her person; she drew, danced, and sang divinely, and the enjoyment of a great fortune allowed her to add also all the resources of elegance to the gifts which she had received from nature. She was

to be met with every where, at balls, public places, and in the public garde and walks: the women found that s shewed herself too much, and the m not enough.

For a year, M. B—— was the mo fortunate of husbands. All at once l took it into his head to be jealous. A why? His wife, indeed, was gay, livel and fickle; but what signifies that? F followed her wherever she went. Sl loved him, and withheld from him no s crets; she gave every thing to pleasur nothing to intrigue. Accordingly M B—— concealed from her very careful the ridiculous torment to which he w a prey. He was jealous and ashamed being so.

It is true that sometimes she we out in the morning, and always alon It was this circumstance which made hi uneasy: whither did she go? Why d he not ask her? He durst not. Ho

strang

strange sometimes is the discretion of the jealous! Why did he not accompany her at least? Impossible: M. B—— was in his study, and the morning is a precious time.

M. B—— had an old servant, of the name of Dubois, formerly his adviser, at this day his confidant: M. Dubois was particularly charged to superintend the breakfast-table. When breakfast was ready, M. B—— said to Dubois: "Dubois, inform your mistress." Sometimes Dubois answered: "She is gone "out."—"Gone out!"—"Yes, Sir."—"Without having breakfasted?"—"Without having breakfasted."—"Is "she gone out on foot?"—"No; in a "hackney-coach."—"Alone?"—"Alone."—"She did not ask for me?"—"She thought that you were not "awake."—"She went out then very "early?"—"About eight o'clock."—"Ah! Dubois!"—"Breakfast, Sir."

Emilie returned home. The morning slipped away, and presently came the hour of dinner. Emilie issued from her dressing-room, and B—— from his study. Dinner was served up, and they sat down to table. The husband was a little gloomy; Emilie, loving. A few friends were of the party. Emilie talked of the solitary walk which she had taken in the morning to the *Champs Aysles*, or else it was at her sister's that she had breakfasted, or the Museum that she had visited, or more frequently still, she had been to her milliner's. "Why these "details?" said her husband to himself; no one questioned her. Why? The case is clear; it is to divert "suspicion." Such is the logic of the jealous.

The young wife's frequent absence from home in the morning increased not a little the husband's inquietude: he could bear it no longer.—"Dubois,"—"Sir?"—"The first time that my wife "goes

" goes out in a morning, and orders you " to go and fetch her a hackney-coach, " bring two, and let me know."—" And " if it be too early"—" How too early?"—" Yes, as to-day, for instance; " She went out before five o'clock. " Last night I went to speak to the " coachman."—" Before five o'clock! " Ah! Dubois!" " Breakfast, Sir."— " I will; but do what I order you, and, " above all, let not a word escape your " lips."

" At five o'clock! My misfortune is " certain," said the husband: " milliner, museum, father, mother, cousins, " friends, every one is asleep at that " hour. It can be no person but a " lover that one is sure of finding awake " at such an hour."

At dinner, Emilie never had a better appetite. " The waters of Passy," said she, " have done me wonderful good; " what a situation! what a view! what

" a pure air! the morning was delight-
" ful."—" The waters of Passy," said the husband to himself; " the term is
" not a bad one. What address! what
" cunning! what deceit!"

M. B—— was not kept long in suspense. The very next day Dubois roused him from his sleep, saying: " Sir, my
" mistress is going out."—" A hackney-
" coach?"—" Sir I've brought two;
" one of them is waiting for you."—
" My wife has seen nothing?"—" No-
" thing at all." M. B—— rose from his bed, and hurried on his clothes, that is, his *robe-de-chambre* and slippers. This was of little consequence; he had not time to dress himself: he hastened down stairs, and concealed himself in the porter's lodge. Away drove the lady.—" Coachman," said he instantly,
" follow the first coach, and stop where-
" ever it stops, that's enough."

Darting into the second coach, away he

he drove after the first. The glasses were drawn up and the blinds pulled down; whence the jealous husband concluded that his wife did not wish to be seen. The drive appeared to him very long; in travelling, jealousy and impatience are bad company. Unfortunately a cursed accident in the *Rue du Bac* also impeded his progress. Two hay-carts got entangled and obstructed his view, as well as the passage. The coachman, the carters, the pedestrians swore aloud, and the husband to himself. At length the hackney-coach crept along close to the wall, and passed the carts. What inquietudes assail the mind of a jealous man! The husband let down the front-glass: "Coachman," said he, "where's "the other carriage?"—"There it is "before us; I am following it."—"That's right." The glass was drawn up again, and the husband flung himself

back into the corner of the hackney-coach.

They drove along the *Rue du Bac*, thence into the *Rue de Sevre*, from the *Rue de Sevre* to the New Boulevard. "What a punishment!" said the husband. "We shall never get to our "journey's end: whither now can she "be going?" The first coach took to the right, the road to *Vaugirard*, the second followed; and presently they were in the country. "This is inconceiv-"able; I know no one in this part of "the world." At length the two carriages stopped at a house. It stood by itself, but was pretty. "Well: 'tis just "as I suspected," continued the husband to himself, "this is a snug little "villa! Ah! traitress!"

When he thought that his wife had had time to alight and go in, he alighted himself, paid his coachman, and dismissed

ed him. The other carriage had been kept; and he fully reckoned that the lady would permit him to return with her; he did not want two carriages to bring her back.

At last mustering resolution to go up to the door, he knocked, and it was opened. He went in. "What do you "want?" said the porter.—"What do "I want? You shall know that pre- "sently. Where's my wife?"—"Your "wife? what wife?"—"This fellow is "in the secret. Will you answer me, "you rascal! or I will go and call the "guard."——"The guard! Are you "drunk or mad? Come, get out of this, "and go along about your business."— "Get out of this, you villain! while .... "To whom does this house belong?"— "What's that to you? Come, get out "of this, and trouble me no more." Some servants coming up, the tumult increased; the porter bawled; the husband

band raved, the porter's wife and the cook interfered, and there was a general confusion. In the midst of the storm the master of the house made his appearance.—" What's the matter?"——" Faith, no one can tell: 'tis this mad-" man. He called me a rascal," said the porter. " And me a prate-a-pace," said the cook.——" Silence," said the master, coming up to M. B——, " What service can I render you, Sir? " You appear agitated; your dress even " announces something that affects you " warmly. Calm yourself, compose " yourself, I beg, and explain yourself. " If I can do any thing to oblige you, " I am at your service." M. B——, a little disconcerted, looked at him, and was silent for a moment. But at length jealousy, resuming its rights: " In truth," said he, " with those hoary locks, Sir, " and that venerable aspect, who would " ever think you capable..... But,

" in

" in short, my wife is here, and I insist " on seeing her."—" Your wife, you " say? What sort of a woman is she? " What is her name? I swear to you " that I have not the honour of know- " ing her."——" But the carriage she " came in is still at your door."—— " What carriage?"—" That in waiting: " look at it."—" You are mistaken: " that carriage is waiting for my sister, " she is but just arrived. However, to " tranquillize your mind completely, all " my house is open to you. See, look " about, and if you find any other wo- " man here but my sister, accuse me of " imposture."

Poor M. B——, a little confused, divined his misadventure, and was confident that the cursed hackney-coachman, diverted by the obstruction in the *Rue du Bac*, took one carriage for another. But, at last, he was obliged to determine how to act; so muttering some excuses, he

he went away. What was he to do? No coach; he was in his slippers and *robe de chambre*, at more than three miles from his own house; and, to complete his distress, it rained as fast as it could pour. At the risk of being hooted, he measured back his way to Paris, passed along the New Boulevard, the *Rue de Sevre*, and the *Rue du Bac*. By the time he arrived at the *Rue de l'Universite*, he was soaked to the skin, bespattered up to the middle, and followed by a crowd of children who took him for a mask. Being nearly exhausted, he fortunately recollected that one of his friends lived at the corner of the street, and there he took shelter. All the family surrounded him, and questioned him to know what had brought him to so strange a plight? On being ushered into the sitting room, who should he find there but his wife quietly engaged in a little musical party with his

his friend's daughters!—On this surprise he could not avoid bursting out into a hearty fit of laughter, and he had the sincerity to relate his adventure. Did he act wisely? He was caressed, rallied, and provided with dry clothes; but he was no longer jealous. Such is the character of their jealousy. A similar *denouement* is sufficient to cure a Frenchman. This would neither cure an Italian, nor a Turk, nor a Persian, nor a Mogul: the reason is that they are men of a less valuable stamp.

I have not heard from thee for a long time, my dear Giafar! why dost thou not write to me?

LETTER XIX.

I frequently experience here, Giafar, a painful sensation. In general, the French treat animals with a degree of brutality incompatible with their natural character. Thou wilt ask whether it is on ferocious animals that they thus lay the weight of their leaden sceptre? No, without doubt; their fortunate climate neither produces tigers, nor lions, nor bears, nor leopards. They have, in their forests, wolves, wild boars, birds of prey, and mischievous animals. They kill the latter, perhaps, more for pleasure than revenge; but they do not persecute them. They have bears, and think it a comic amusement to exhibit their awkward gestures, and at the heavy motions of their clumsy structure; they chain and muzzle them in order that they may laugh more at their ease

ease at the seemingly-ridiculous propensities which nature has been pleased to implant in these quadrupeds. But, in short, the condition of the bears is not yet so deplorable. The preservation of their existence is closely connected with the interest of their master; he strikes them but little, and feeds them well. He finds them a livelihood because they do the same for him. Undoubtedly, there is neither nobleness nor delicacy in attentions of this description. But what signifies this to the bear; it is not given to him to attach a value to one sentiment more than to another; he avails himself of the advantage without troubling himself concerning the motive. He walks slowly over the public squares; he balances himself on his hind feet; mirth surrounds him; his presence excites laughter and joy: he dines well, sups better, sleeps in peace, and, if he has

not enough for him to be condemned to the punishment of fattening himself only by massacres, without preparing his victims for death by torture? Cruel man! spare then at least unnecessary sufferings, if you have not the power of sparing them life.

Wert thou, Giafar, to see the immense flocks and herds that are every day devoured by those enormous gulfs which they call cities, thou wouldst shudder at the atrocious and barbarous insensibility with which they conduct them; they beat them, and drive them towards the horrible den where the poor animals are to be butchered. Sometimes fifty or a hundred calves are heaped together on carriages, the rough motion of which is a real torture; their feet are bound and cut by ropes; the bruises and wounds which they receive attest the pain that they experience. At every jolt, their heads, weighed down by the fever which con-

onsumes them, are knocked together
id bruised against the sides of the car-
age; or, hanging without support on
ie outside of the vehicle, covered with
ie dirt through which they are dragged,
ey are filled with the blood rushing
om every part of their body, and the
rrents of which swell, redden, and en-
rge their eyes: in this dreadful situa-
on are these victims placed to travel a
istance of ten, fifteen, or twenty leagues!
t one time you behold poor sheep, fa-
gued by a journey of fifty, sixty, and
ften a hundred leagues. Frightened at
ne tumult of carriages, at the multitude
f men, at the aspect even of the heap
f houses, so new to their timid looks,
hey fall or stop in the middle of the
treet. Then the butchers driving them,
nd the coachmen and carters whose
progress they impede, overwhelm them
with blows, you see their executioners
seize hold of them by their fleeces, and
throw

throw these unfortunate animals to a distance of ten paces, and the ensanguined pavement indicate the mark which their nose and knees have left on it. At another time you behold enormous oxen bending under the weight of the fat which they imbibed in the fecundity of pastures,—of that fat which cupidity and gluttony took care to collect on their bulky sides, in order to second the calculations of avarice, and the hopes of delicacy,—covered with sweat, froth, and dust, oppressed by their own weight, and paralyzed by weariness, their strength forsakes them, and they remain panting in the middle of the highway. Oh! didst thou then hear the sharp cuts of the whips which tear their flanks; didst thou see those pointed sticks which their inhuman drivers thrust into their palpitating limbs; wert thou witness of the fury of the bull-dogs that are irritated against them, and whose murderous teeth

tear

r their ears, their nostrils, and their
ughs, thou wouldst ask thyself, "What
nplacable god, in this country, stamped
nimals with the seal of his frightful
eprobation, and what crime they had
ommitted against nature to be con-
emned to such horrible treatment?"
And the horse, of which man is here
proud; the horse, whose courage
des him in battle, stops, and over-
ows his enemies, frequently conceals
i from their fury, snatches him from
death which their uplifted sword
pared for him; the horse, whose mea-
ed paces trace the furrows whence
ity will spring, and which Luxury as-
ates to his enjoyments, harnesses to
car of effeminacy, displays, resplen-
t with strength, grace, youth, and
lth, in the rides, in festivals, and on
er public occasions; the horse obtains
more of their gratitude. If he has
received from the hands of nature an

elegant form, if his too vigorous
bers disqualify him for supple an
motion, then the most constant f
the most painful labour, and th
laborious career become his lo
thick vertebræ bend and sink un
most weighty burdens. The deep
with which his broad chest is c
bespeak in vain the weight of hi
he must either expire or drag i
him. Because he is strong, he is
required to go beyond his strengt
patient of the bit reddened by th
which issues from his broken teet
pressed under the burden with wh
is overloaded, furious at the pain
he is made to experience by the
rous carter, he makes a clatter w
feet, contracts himself, does not
ble, but sinks down, struggles
again, and expires: even his last
not yet the signal of the last b
will receive.

C

O cruel insensibility for animals! Deplorable system of corruption! Yes, corruption! for this barbarity is known only in cities. Horses and oxen are subjected by the husbandman also to labour, but at least his consoling hand sometimes caresses them, lightens their burdens, encourages them, supports them, and when the day closes he leads them back in peace to the hospitable farm, where their strength is recruited by food and rest. The herdsman insults not the affecting innocence of sheep, and young lambs, or frisking heifers, by blows; and if, from time to time, a few are sacrificed to the wants of the rustic table, some sighs are given to their last moments, and it is always at least an hour of mourning for the children. But, in town, the most timid age is already ferocious; I have seen wretched infants laugh when they struck an unfortunate lamb on the head with a stick or a stone.

Childhood strike innocence! Dost thou conceive it, Giafar? And men laughed! men applauded! What a subject of grief and deep despair! What did they applaud? The senseless beings! The first step, perhaps, to the gibbet.

And those incomparable friends, those models of fidelity, attachment, patience, and unlimited obedience, who have no pleasure but in our looks, no pain but in our silence; indefatigable centinels, who are attached to us by the most tender feeling; who watch over our sleep, on the threshold of our doors; those good dogs, all whose motions, cries, and glances are a friendly confidence; whose complaints of our brutality are a caress, and never a reproach; who are born under our roof, lie at our feet, and die on our grave. Well, Giafar, grant a tear to their misfortune; the French have made of them beasts of burden!!! Their flexible loins are overloaded with bales,

they

they are harnessed to little carriages, and draw along goods, and even men: thus avarice, indolence, and fraud are conveyed from place to place by fidelity. How often have I laid my compassionate hand on the forehead of those poor animals when I have met with them at the door of houses, chained to the shafts of a little cart which they had just been drawing, lying down in the dust, panting with fatigue, heat, and thirst! They cast on me a sorrowful look, and seemed to say to me, "I am in great pain, I "can bear it no longer; I am dying; "but I do not complain: 'tis a man whom "I serve." The master appeared: with a kick he forced them to rise; and if, by chance, his hand approached them, they licked that hand, and the man did not blush!

One day I passed by the side of a little cart of this description. The driver had unloaded some of the packages which it

" Curse, swear, and make as much n
" as you please," said I to the by-stand
" that dog has a hundred times m
" sense than the man who is driving h
" and of this you will be convinc
Then taking by the arm the man sit
on the stones, and forcing him to st
a little on one side, " Do you see,"
I to the driver, " that package wh
" you forgot under the stone, and wh
" this gentleman concealed from you,
" *intentionally*, no doubt? Put it h
" into your little cart, and you will
" that your dog will move forwa
The friskiness and joy of the dog pro
sufficiently that I was not mistak
The driver disconcerted, the sharper
concerted, and the crowd equally
concerted, exclaimed in chorus, " A
" my God, 'tis true. What an instin
" however, there is in a beast! The p
" dog!"—What had been the logic
the crowd at the beginning of the sce

To abuse the man who took the part of the dog, the faithful guardian of the property of his master. What was their logic afterwards? To caress the dog, without thinking of the man whose prudence had saved the driver's property. It neither came into their head to thank me, nor to consider that the man seated on the stone wished to steal the package. Before the mystery was cleared up, the dog was to them nothing more than a miserable machine which might be destroyed without any consequence; after it was cleared up, the dog was the only personage that shewed any understanding in the adventure.

Mussulmen carry to excess their hospitality and compassion towards animals. The inhabitants of the French towns carry to excess their indifference and barbarity towards them. At Constantinople, this is the result of a religious error; at Paris, it is the fruit of meta-

physical pride. The lout who answers me, "'Tis but a beast after all," and Father Mallebranche, who, by a kick with his foot, causes a bitch to miscarry that was fondling about him, are equal in my eyes. What difference is there between science and ignorance, when barbarism is the limit of both? None. It is not very necessary to write, *pro* and *con*, so many volumes respecting the soul of beasts. Is it worth the trouble to stake so much pride in building a scientific system, when, in order to bring it to the ground, the groaning of a dog will be sufficient? When it shall be proved to me that this dog has no soul, mine will not be the better. The privilege of occasioning pain, methinks, is not an addition to virtue. Nothing so extraordinary as their reasonings on the metempsychosis of certain nations. As religion, no doubt, it is a folly; but as a thought of the legislator, it is another thing.

thing. The good christians imagine, on the faith of their learned men, and their learned men on the faith of their pride, that the sages who founded the doctrine of the transmigration of souls believed this nonsense. Those sages merely believed in a truth; it is, that man maltreated animals unjustly, and that it was necessary to remedy the evil. "What," exclaimed they, "propagate an error in order to reform an "abuse! this is a great crime." Very well; but is not an error which corrects, as good as a reason which never corrects? Every thing depends on temperance in the employment of remedies.

I am told that their Institute has proposed this question: "What influence "can the ill usage of animals have on "morals?" Such a question, undoubtedly, does honour to men who have this method only of calling attention to social vices; but what good will result from it?

Some writers will compose eloquent memoirs on this subject: they will make researches to ascertain in what degree of estimation animals were and are among the nations of antiquity and modern nations. They will compose very harmonious periods on the travelling camel; on the horse, the friend of the Arab; on the ox, the favourite of Ceres; on the dog, the companion of Diana: they will paint, in glowing colours, the ingratitude of man; they will prove that he owes to these auxiliary companions two-thirds of his power; they will establish, that harshness towards animals is the prelude of harshness towards our fellow-creatures; that the daily spectacle of the evils which we make them suffer dries up the heart of man, deteriorates the sensibility of woman, and disposes children to cruelty, and a thousand other common-place ideas of this sort. One of the writers will obtain the prize; he

he will be crowned at a public meeting; and the next day nothing more will be thought of the matter. The next day a carter will whip his horse severely, because he cannot make him clamber up the rise of a bridge with too heavy a load; a hackney-coachman will keep his deplorable pair of nags on the trot for twenty-four hours without allowing them to eat or drink; the steeds of a thousand fine ladies will be kept in waiting, for four hours, at the door of a public place, exposed, all in a sweat, to the wind, the rain, the snow, and the frost; thousands of idle people will cause themselves to be paid an extravagant price for tormenting a million of dogs which they will train for field sports; and every thing will proceed as before. Grave persons will say, "You must think no more "of the matter; you see that the evil "is incurable; for the memoir of that "author was excellent, and it produced "nothing."

" nothing."—" What could it produce?"
—" Every thing that one had a right
" to expect from its great publicity."—
" But it was not published."—" Are you
" dreaming? Did not the author gain
" the prize? Was not his memoir men-
" tioned in the presence of six hundred
" persons? Was it not printed, sent to
" the news-papers, and publicly sold?"
—" All this proves not that it was pub-
" lished."—" It was read, you say, in
" the presence of six hundred persons."
" Out of these six hundred persons,
" there were three hundred women who
" did not attend to it, two hundred and
" fifty men who attended to the women
" only; there remain fifty; out of these
" fifty there were twenty-five who un-
" derstood nothing of it, and the other
" twenty-five were also competitors for
" the prizes, who, for that sole reason,
" will find the work detestable, and
" consequently will not speak of it."—

" So

"So much the better; but it will be "printed, and sent to the journalists." —"Who will not quote it, or will criti- "cise it."—"Why?"—"For two rea- "sons: because they are not able to "compose one similar, or because it has "gained the prize."—"But this ought "to be an additional motive."—"By no "means: do you not conceive that when "a man censures what a hundred and "forty have approved, it is as if he said "—I alone have more understanding, "more knowledge, and more discrimina- "tion than a hundred and forty?"— "But he will be laughed at, and he will "not be believed."—"It is you that "would be laughed at, if you were heard "to reason in this manner. Do you not "know that nine-tenths of the readers "of journals, and the group which just "now took the part of the brutal driver "against the dog, are the same thing? "But I will, if you choose, admit that

"the

" the six hundred persons may have lis-
" tened with all the attention imagina-
" ble; I am willing that the fifteen hun-
" dred copies of the memoir may have
" been sold and read. There are two
" thousand one hundred persons who
" have a knowledge of it. And what
" are two thousand one hundred per-
" sons out of a population of thirty mil-
" lions of inhabitants? Is it not as if the
" work did not exist? And on such a
" subject who is it important to enlight-
" en? The people, most certainly; for
" it is the people, above all, who treat
" animals with cruelty. But do the peo-
" ple read? and if they read, what are
" they made to read? I see, at the cor-
" ner of every street, venders of alma-
" nacs selling to them Mathieu Laens-
" berg, where they find what day is
" wholesome to cut one's nails, or what
" month will be rainy; I meet at every
" step with dirty and hoarse fiddlers dis-

" tributing

" buting to them pot-house songs, or
" canticles to Saint Bridget. But what
" beside? Nothing. It will not there-
" fore be by eloquent and learned me-
" moirs that the well-disposed will suc-
" ceed in mitigating the lot of animals;
" neither will it be by preaching to the
" people that compassionate humanity
" ought to extend to them, because, for
" a long time at least they would not un-
" derstand you; and there would be
" found a certain class of men, whose
" prejudices or interest would soon
" whisper in their ear, that this species
" of humanity would be an impiety; but
" it would be by wise regulations, which
" should prevent and destroy the abuse,
" without having the appearance of com-
" bating it; which should order, for in-
" stance, that the number of draught
" horses should be proportioned to the
" load of the carriages; which should
" prescribe to the hackney-coachman

" (and

" (and this by portions, in order that the
" public service might not suffer) so
" many hours of rest in the course of
" the day; which should prohibit that
" multitude of dogs kept by a crowd of
" people too poor to feed them, and
" whose mind, tormenting itself to draw
" from them some profit, subjects them
" to a labour foreign to their constitu-
" tion, and which may engender mad-
" ness, and all its attendant horrors; or
" which, leaving them to contend in the
" streets against hunger and thirst, de-
" votes them to become victims of men
" who, clandestinely, run over the town
" during the night in order to seek, at
" the corner of the streets, the rags in
" which they traffic, and cut the throats
" of those unfortunate dogs whose skins
" they sell: which should, in short, or-
" der the slaughter-houses to be trans-
" ferred out of the town, in order that
" the butchers, whose disposition is ir-

" ritable,

"rifable, may no longer be exposed to
"revenging themselves on the animals
"for their ill humour occasioned by the
"obstructions which they experience in
"the streets when they are conducting
"flocks of sheep and droves of cattle.
"In order to remedy abuses, and espe-
"cially an abuse of this species, it is
"much less to sermons, to scientific me-
"moirs, to discourses of morality, that
"recourse should be had, than to find-
"ing the means of making the people
"forget their habits. It is much less
"difficult to wean man from them than
"to correct him; he perceives not that
"he forgets; he always perceives that
"he is lectured; the one diverts him,
"the other tires him."

LETTER XX.

WHOEVER sees Paris, and not studied it, would imagine that one there gives himself up to busi apparently, here are no idle persons. the rich, wilt thou say. At Paris rich are not idle—here, of all pr sions, the most laborious, perhaps, i of spending an income of two hu thousand livres. To behold the su cies only, activity appears general; every morning, in this great city, thousand people know not how shall live the rest of the day. Two c engender these idle busy bodies; tc the expression will appear singular correct. Idle, in fact, since they nothing to do with what occupies men; busy bodies, nevertheless, for inventive genius will find means tc ate every day an employment for

h

irs, of a few moments even, in order procure themselves a livelihood till the xt day. I say two causes: the first, he erroneous idea formed of Paris in provinces, and in foreign countries: ople imagine, that here flows the Pactus; that here are the mines of Potosi; it here fortune, like nature, has a ast for all. Let us take our station one of the outer gates of Paris: dost ou see that crowd of travellers, some ll fed, well clad, in good health, arriv- in good carriages, in convenient diences, on good horses; others on foot, stick in their hand, a sack on their ck, ill-clothed, gloomy, and needy? Are ese not, in truth, two classes very dif- ent?—They both are coming to Paris the first time. In your opinion, Gir, what sentiment brings them hither? Thou wilt answer me that, in some, it the love of pleasure, and in the others, e fear of misery.—Thou art mistaken:

it

it is vanity, nothing but vanity
former come hither to spend a li
ney, in hopes of causing themsel
remarked here presently; the latt
to endeavour to gain a little m
hopes of causing themselves t
marked here in a few months; a
in hopes of leading the fashion
village, when they return thither
sons from the country, women al
think that a journey to Paris giv
a sort of preponderance in the
towns. This is a little sort of a
of which they take advantage, i
to criticise, disdain, and look do
pity on all the personages they m
again in the little circle to whi
have returned. In point of
dancing, *bon ton*, fashions, cook
public amusements, who, in smal
would venture to appeal from the
of a woman, or of one of the wo
whose high destiny had raised to

ne honour of spending a week in Pa-

All their decrees are impressive as nder. One of their dramatic authors pourtrayed the absurdities of little ns. Paris is ungrateful: the provin- departments exercise their admiration ll the absurdities of Paris; and Paris ncessantly ridiculing the absurdities of provincial departments.—The piece refore excited laughter; but what de me laugh was, to see absurdity ghing at absurdity; and these two thers not think themselves belonging the same family, because they wore erent liveries. It is not the absurdi- of little towns that the wise man finds pportable: the scourge of little towns sists of the personages whose absurd- is to think themselves proprietors of absurdities of Paris. The pretension most familiar to these provincial folks, ose vanity leads them to Paris, is to cy that their arrival, their stay, their person,

person, will make a sensation in
where the great of all nations, th
bassadors, the kings even, are s
perceived in the crowd. This h
making a noise is the chimera
from the poorest to the riches
young country girl, who, from h
lage, bends her way towards Paris,
fectly confident that she will be
of; as the wife of some great mar
country town, is convinced that,
charms and disbursements, sh
eclipse the shew and attractions
the women in Paris.

Madame du P——, a Creolian
the wife of an East-India director,
she had married in Asia, being
tomed to live like a queen at
cherry, where she modestly aske
courtiers if the queen of France ha
diamonds than she had, came to E
and arrived at Paris for the first ti
her life; apartments had been prev

ngaged and furnished for her in a hotel, part of which was occupied by Madame lu B. de la M——. Madame du P—— rrived in the evening.—Chance willed that on the same day Madame du B. de la M—— gave a brilliant entertainment. The façade of the pile of building which she inhabited was illuminated, the court was full of carriages, and a magnificent fire-work was exhibited in the garden. On her arrival, Madame du P—— perceived all this from her windows. The rattling of the carriages, the explosion of some sky-rockets, and the sounds of a numerous orchestra reached her ears; her vanity persuaded her that these honours concerned her. She enquired by whose orders this entertainment had been prepared. She was told that it was ordered by Madame B. de la M——. "Go to that lady," said Madame du P—— to one of her *valets-de-chambre*, "and tell her that I thank her for the

" attention she pays me; but that, be-
" ing excessively fatigued, I am going to
" bed, and that she will oblige me by
" putting a stop to this noise." The *va-let-de-chambre* did as he was directed. Being introduced into the apartment of Madame du B. de la M——, he deli-vered his message.—" Who is this Ma-
" dame du P—— ?" asked she, laughing. " Do you know a Madame du P——?" said she to some men standing round her. —" Not at all."—" She is," said the *va-let-de-chambre*, " the lady of the go-
" vernor of Pondicherry."—" I know
" no more of the husband than of his
" lady," rejoined she. " And she ima-
" gines that it is in honour of her that I
" give this entertainment?"—" Yes,
" madam."—" That is excellent! Tell
" her that I have not the honour of
" knowing her; that I pay compliments
" to no one; that I give entertainments
" to my friends only; that I am ex-
" tremely

" tremely sorry if this present one inter-
" feres with her rest; but that she will
" be so good, no doubt, as to allow me
" to be mistress in my own residence."
When the *valet-de-chambre* brought back this answer, Madame du P—— could not comprehend that her arrival in Paris was not the news of the day: it was the town-talk the day following, thanks to the ridiculous step she had taken. But when the geniuses of this cast return from Paris to their little towns, they display absurdities of another description.

One of those *Escarbagnas*, so humorously pourtrayed by Molière, was returned to Séès: she had seen every thing, heard every thing, and knew every thing in Paris. The inhabitants of Séès swore only by her. After her return, were a few bottles of cyder drank, it was a *thé*; did a party sit down on Sunday to play at *mouche*, it was a *bouillote*.

The court where the lady resided w
the *Chaussée d'Antin*; her twelve o'clo
dinner was called a breakfast; and t
seven o'clock supper, dinner. Eve
thing had thus been *unbaptized* for t
last eighteen months. By chance a c
median, belonging to one of the lit
theatres of the *Boulevards*, went to Sé
He took up his abode at the sign of t
Coq Hardi. The landlady, being na
rally of an inquisitive temper, inqui
who he was, what he was doing, whe
he came, and whither he was going?
"I come from Paris," replied he; '
"am a player, and am going
"Avranches."—"A Paris player! Go
"God!" In half an hour, all Sées w
informed that a Paris player lodged at t
Coq Hardi. A great buzz—"Whc
"he? What's his name? What cl
"racters does he perform? We m
"see Madame Bertrand—Madame B
"trand, who knows Paris as well as t
"to

"town of Séès—Madame Bertrand, to "whom we owe the happiness of living "at Séès as people live in Paris." The gossips went to Madame Bertrand— "Madame Bertrand," said they, "do "you know the great news?"—"What "news?"—"A player."—"A country "player! fye! fye! gentlemen! When "any one has seen Paris, as I have, the "idea is not to be endured."—"No! "we are not speaking of a country play- "er: this one belongs to Paris."—"Oh! "for instance, no one can impose on me "in that respect; I know them all."— "He belongs to Paris, I tell you; I have "it from the landlady of the *Coq Hardi*." —"Fine authority! a woman who has "never set her eyes on Paris."—"But "she has it from himself."—"Is he tall, "short, fat, or thin?"—"I know not; "I had not a very good sight of him. "He was in the corner of the kitchen "chimney; but he appeared to me ra-

" ther thin than fat."—" Thin? It
" M. Vanhove."—" But look, there h
" at the door of the *Coq Hardi*, baski
" in the sun. Place yourself for a m
" ment at your shop door, see if y
" know him."—" My glass: well, I
" glass is not to be found. What an
" sufferable thing is a country servan
" That girl has suffered me to co
" down stairs without my glass. Let
" try whether I can see with my nak
" eye. Where is he?"—" There, o
" bench between the house of Mot
" Genté and the gable end of the C
—" Good God! I am not mistaken, i
" M. la Rive: Gentlemen, M. la R
" in person! ah! good heaven! I s
" not get the better of it: the surpri
" too much for me. . . . Gothon: no,
" my nerves; 'twill be nothing; 'twil
" off. Gothon, some orange-flower
" ter."—" Zooks! shall it be said, to
" disgrace of the town of Sées, tha

" T

"man of such ability passed through it "without giving out a play?"—"Giving "out a play! How countryfied you "speak; say, acting a play. What a "terrible thing is country dialect!"— "If some of us went to beg him to play." —"Very well; but remember that he's "a first-rate player; and I was told at "Paris that, in the country, these first-"rate players took care to be well paid." —"Well paid! and how much do you "think?—"Why I can't tell rightly. "However, you are cautioned; that "concerns you; you'll do things in a "grand style."—"Ah! my God, if it "had luckily happened that he had "brought with him Mademoiselle Rau-"court, the first actress in the world, "gentlemen: such a size! such a make! "such a colour! such a plumpness! so "sweet a voice! gestures so noble! tears "so affecting! But the town of Sées will

" never have the good fortune to see " Mademoiselle Raucourt."

The good folks, who listened to Madame Bertrand, left her to go in quest of the player. " Sir," said they to him, " a lady belonging to our *place*, Madame " Bertrand, and since you, Sir, are a Paris " player, it must needs be that you are " well acquainted with her; for Madame " Bertrand spent a month in Paris for " her amusement, at the house of her " aunt, who is mistress of a ready-made " linen warehouse, No. 27, in the *Rue* " *Tirechape?* and certainly a man of abi- " lity, like you, Sir, knows the *Rue Tire-* " *chape?*" — " The *Rue Tirechape*, I " think, gentlemen. . . ." — " Yes, most " certainly, Sir. What we say is not " because we doubt your knowledge, " Sir; but Madame Bertrand knew you " to be M. la Rive, the greatest actor " who plays comedy at Paris, and we

" come

" come to beg you."—" M. la Rive,
" gentlemen, I assure you."—" Sir, you
" need not assure us; we know per-
" fectly well that, as for what concerns
" Paris, Madame Bertrand is never mis-
" taken. She told us that first-rate play-
" ers took care to be well paid in the
" country. This is no more than what's
" right. Every one must live; so we
" shall not haggle about the matter; but
" if you will act a play this evening, we'll
" give you three louis. Oh! we do
" things in a grand style. They would
" not do this at Bernay."—" Three louis,
" gentlemen! oh! my God! yes. I'll
" be M. la Rive, I'll be Lekain if you
" choose: for three louis I'll do any
" thing. I'll play comedy presently,
" this evening, all night long, if you wish
" it. Three louis! Have you a com-
" pany of players here?"—" A set of
" country players! for what do you take
" us? For shame!"—" Ha! ha! and

" you have a theatre?"—" A theatre!
" No."—" And an orchestra?"—" An
" orchestra? No."—" But then, how do
" you mean——"—" Oh! faith, that's
" your affair! you ought to have your
" tools with you: every man his trade;
" we pay, you play."—" But at least you
" will grant me the use of a room."—
" Well!" said the landlady, " you've
" only to take our front room on the
" one pair, where Father Simon's little
" girl's wedding was kept."—" That's
" enough."—" 'Tis all settled."—" And
" for play-bills?"—The attorney's son set to work, and engrossed on four sheets of paper, that *M. la Rive, the first actor of Paris, passing through the town of Sées, at the solicitation of the lovers of acting, will give, for the first and last time, a representation of the* HEAD WITH A WIG, OF THE VENTRILOQUIST, AND OF HARLEQUIN ALL ALONE, new pieces performed by one person, in which he will

will act the first characters. The play-bill was stuck up.—" What folly! what " a caricature!" said two young Parisian volunteers, going to rejoin their corps, and whose route led them through Séès. " La Rive here! La Rive announced to " play in——Come, now, this must be " some trick. Let us sleep here; we " shall see this, and partake in the laugh." They went into the *Coq Hardi.* It was with no small difficulty that they procured any dinner: nothing was thought of but M. la Rive: waiters, maids, neighbours, old and young, wits and fools, all were agog: and the landlady, an excellent calculator, was deeply engaged in contriving how to prevent the three louis from finding their way out of the town of Séès.

At length night arrived: the room began to be filled, and presently it was crowded. Madame Bertrand took her seat. The alcove, whence the bed was

removed, was the stage. The house was brilliantly illuminated with four candles, three in the alcove, and one in the boxes. The cries of "*Begin, begin!*" the clapping of hands, the noise of sticks on the floor, and other preliminaries, announced the highly-wound expectation of the audience. Madame Bertrand was delighted. "This is Paris!" said she. At length the two curtains, which skreened the alcove, were drawn back, and the great actor made his appearance. "Look," exclaimed one of the volunteers, "'tis "the clown that plays at Nicolet's on "the Boulevard." A great clamour of *Down with them! Turn 'em out! Turn out the rioters! Out with the rioters!* "Charming!" repeated Madame Bertrand: "This is Paris!" The good lady little suspected that she was reasoning like a philosopher; and may fate ordain that she never reads this letter! Call a woman of fashion a philosopher! God alone

alone could forgive such an injury! However, it is no less true that she spoke very wisely in saying, "This is "Paris!" for mankind are the same in all places.

"Well, gentlemen," said the volunteer, mounting on a chair, "we will not "interrupt your amusements; but it is "rendering you a service to prevent that "wretched player from taking unfair "advantage of your credulity by assuming a celebrated name."—"May the "devil fetch me if I took his name!" said the comedian, from his alcove: "ask, if you please, the deputies sent "to me by these amateurs, whether they "did not insist that I was M. la Rive. "Is this my fault? They had three louis "on their side; I was quite alone on "mine. Could I contend against three "louis and a whole town?"—"Is it "our fault?" said the deputies: "Ma"dame Bertrand told us that this was "his

" his name: can a whole town contend " with a lady who has seen Paris?"— " Is it my fault," said Madame Bertrand, " if your servant-maids are rustics? " Could I contend with a whole gang " of shopkeepers that fancy one has eyes " for seeing these things? If I had had " my glass, I should not have been de- " ceived."—" That's clear," said the volunteer. " It is the fault of no person. " But will you believe me? Here you " are all assembled: instead of yawning " at the grimaces of this buffoon, let us " pass the night in dancing; and, since " you are so fond of the fashions of " Paris, my comrade and I will teach " you the newest country-dances."—" I " second the motion," said the player; " and for the three louis I'll play for " you on the fiddle."—"A country ball!" Madame Bertrand made a wry face. "Three louis for a fiddler!" The amateurs made wry faces. But the landlady,

lady, a woman of good sense, who thought that a night-ball and her cellar were two things which might be reconciled, ranged herself on the side of the volunteers. In a little town, a publican is a person of weight: the ball took place. But, in order to avoid in future a similar mistake, the council of the *ediles* of Séès presented a humble address to Madame Bertrand to request her never to stir without her glass.

When vanity, which leads so many people to Paris, has no other consequences than ridiculous adventures like those of the East-India governor's lady and the female shopkeeper of Séès, thou canst readily conceive, Giafar, that there is no great mischief; but seven-eighths of these persons do not leave it when they have spent their trifle of money, or when they have not earned any on reaching it. Now, as the second cause of the embarrasment in which every day

fifty

fifty thousand persons find themselves at Paris to live, arises from the circumstance that, out of a hundred children brought up in France, there are eighty who are taught no trade, they must necessarily ransack their brain in order to create resources. Hence so many sharpers. But I shall speak to thee of those only whose conceptions have nothing reprehensible. Do you arrive at the door of a playhouse? Is it a day when the crowd is great? Do you find, in short, one of those ranks of people, formed into what is here called a *queue*, which the police causes the public to make for the purpose of preventing persons from stifling each other round the offices where the tickets of admission are distributed? Are you put out of patience at waiting? Survey this rank, and it seldom happens that you will not meet with some man, decently dressed, who will say to you, "Sir, an unforeseen af-

"fair

" fair calls me away; do you wish for " my place?" He will not ask you any money for this place; but he will add, " I gave twenty-four *sous* to a *Savoyard*, " who kept it for me." You understand what that means. If he is near the head of the rank, it is three livres he has given to the *Savoyard*; the whole in proportion to the distance, more or less, from the offices. You pay, and he goes away. Keep your eye on him, you will see him place himself at the farther end of the rank till a second customer presents himself; and this part he will repeat twice or thrice in the course of the same evening.

Remark in that public walk those two men talking together: they speak loud; they are two partners. See them gradually approach that group of five or six persons. They are sure that these are strangers: they have a particular instinct for distinguishing them. They continue

their

their dialogue—"That is an excellent "*restaurateur*. He will ruin himself: "it is impossible for a man to furnish "long such good dinners at so cheap "a rate."—"By no means; he is an "honest fellow, and his brethren are "rogues; there lies the whole mystery." Perhaps this premeditated conversation will fail in its object nine times out of ten; but patience triumphs over every obstacle; the tenth it succeeds, and that is enough. Those strangers, who are not unfrequently made sensible of the necessity of economy, will ask them, with a timid politeness, if they could not learn where this honest *restaurateur* was to be found? The two companions will answer with a cold, but easy politeness. They will take care to render the address unintelligible. The strangers will lament the embarrassment occasioned by their not being well acquainted with the streets of Paris. The companions will add, with

with a tone of indifference, "We are "going to dine at this *restaurateur*'s; "if agreeable to you, gentlemen, we "will shew you the way." Great acknowledgments on the one side; a slight bow on the other. They walk on; they arrive at the place. The *restaurateur* is in the secret. These are agents whom he employs to bring him into fashion. The two masters of the ceremonies dine *gratis*, and the strangers, without suspecting it, pay for their dinner.

What is that paper which this young man has just given to the ballad-singer, and which the latter runs over in a quivering voice? Draw near, and listen to them.—"That's good for nothing; 'tis "too much, *Sir*."—"You're jesting; "for Jolibois was very anxious to buy it "of me just now."—"A fine proof truly! "And how much do you ask for this "master-piece?"—"Zooks! you know "the price; six francs."—"Six and thirty "*sous*."

" *sous.*"—" Come, now, I refused three " livres."—" 'Twas not from me, how- " ever."—" It belongs to no one but " you."—" A pretty piece of finesse! " But, no matter for this once, because " you are a customer; for were it not " for that."—" Here, there are two pieces " of thirty *sous*. But make me some- " thing better, something in the good " style, something jovial for instance, or " else a canticle; that takes."—" A fine " joke, truly; canticles! I would not " make you a canticle for your two pieces " of thirty *sous*, do you understand me?" —" Now hold your tongue; as if that " was not a song as well as the other."— " That's no matter! The fashion has " only to die away, and the goods would " be left on my hands."

I should never finish, Giafar, were I to pourtray to thee the thousand and one ways in which their wits work to find the means of living for twenty-four hours

hours only. They also depend not a little on the credulity of the Parisians, and place among their resources that foolish curiosity, which they here call *cockneyship*. A man cuts a wine-glass, or a rummer, in a spiral form. This is not a discovery very new, or very extraordinary. He shews this glass in the public squares; he turns it about in a hundred different manners. This glass, cut into circular slips, is lengthened out, contracted, or turned topsy-turvy at pleasure. The crowd admires this exhibition, and every one manifests his astonishment at so great a miracle by the disbursement of a few *sous*. Nevertheless, there is scarcely any one of those people who, a hundred times in his life, has not seen how a glazier proceeds to cut a pane of glass. Farther on are men who, with a comic gravity, sell the numbers which will be drawn in the next lottery; and what is more tragic than

than comic is, that a hundred persons around buy these tickets, and yielding their places to new purchasers, who are incessantly succeeding each other, go about their business, convinced that their fortune is made.

Elsewhere, it is an account of their amours which crafty fellows sell to shop-girls, little milliners, mantua-makers, and servant-maids. This traffic is not the most unprofitable. On the anniversary of the birth and wedding, at marriages and christenings, new-year's day above all, the relations, friends, men of all ages, but chiefly young ones, and those among others who were for a long time called *petits-maîtres*, afterwards *élégans*, and who at length have at this day obtained the name of *merveilleux*, distribute with profusion to the ladies *bonbons* of all colours and of all kinds. Each of these *bonbons* is commonly accompanied by a motto, a couplet,

let, or a prediction. Nothing is more mple, more insignificant, than these orts of distichs, quatrains, and madri- als. For a length of time, a man fur- ished them by contract to all the con- ctioners of Paris, at so much per thou- nd, and he had acquired a certain ce- brity in this kind of silly composition. esides, to annex these tiresome mottos o sugar-plumbs was conforming to the ws of nature, who always annexes some itterness to sweets. Be this as it may, eople accept these sugar-plumbs, read ese mottos, laugh at their flatness, burn em, or throw them away. A good hance for the lackies when these mottos scape the flames; they pick them up arefully, preserve them, and when they ave a certain number, they sell them or a trifle to those fortune-tellers, whose ipods are established on the quays. he latter sell them again, in their turn, o servant-maids, to country girls just come

come to town, to the wives of petty tradesmen, sometimes to great simpletons and idle fools, who, all imagining that those men read in futurity, are either dupes of their tone of trivial inspiration, or else have the little pride of affecting to laugh at them, but go home fully persuaded that they carry with them the decree of their future destiny. They believe in it, for they pay; of this there is no doubt; here it is in the character, as well as in the economy, of the lower classes of society to give nothing for nothing.

But, Giafar, what suspicions, troubles, divisions, and quarrels, do these follies, which perhaps the government would do well not to tolerate, sow in the families of the common people! To foresee this, it is sufficient to listen to the words which the first movement snatches from the credulous customers of these sycophants when they read, or cause to be read, these pretended predictions.

One

ne day I observed a group of this
l, with which those impostors sur-
ıd themselves, and I lamented their
tence: falsehood on one side, weak-
on the other. O my friend! this
t is far from being a gay one. I
d near a woman who might still be
ed young. She carried a child in her
s: the garments of the mother and
d bespoke indigence. She waited for
turn. I saw her approach, and de-
t two *sous* on the table. The for-
ɔ-teller asked her age. "Thirty,"
ied she. He pretended to read in a
juring-book, and said to her, "You
ust have Number 29." He then
ed into the pigeon-holes of a box,
took from that marked No. 29 one
hose foolish mottos which I just now
ıtioned. It was as follows:

"*Eglé, prenez garde à vous*;
"*Iris en veut à votre époux*."

She read it; I saw her colour deeply, and she suffered a few words to escape her with an expression of poignant chagrin. I had suspected this. She went away. I could not forbear to follow her, and say to her, " How can such a stale " trick affect your peace of mind? Do " you not see that men of this descrip- " tion have no other view than to pro- " cure themselves a wretched resource " to live? They dare not thieve, because " they would be punished; but they levy " a tax on simplicity."—" Ah! Sir, 'tis " the business of those people to tell " fortunes; I assure you that they are " seldom mistaken: for instance, I sus- " pected my husband, and you see that " the conjuror has guessed right."— " Do you know," said I, " what is that " printed motto which he has given to " you?" I then took out one of those little sweetmeats which I happened to have in my pocket.—" You see this

" sweet-

weetmeat," continued I, " it is for our child; but look at this paper in which it is wrapped. Now, that which his man has just given to you was mployed for a similar purpose. Open he one I put into your hand, and you vill see that it will have some vague neaning, which may be applied in answer to a hundred different questions." e accordingly opened it: conceive her prise, and at the same time my joy, en, through a hazard no less fortunate n singular, this motto proved to be, rd for word, the same as that which she l received from the conjuror! She reined stupified; but serenity soon reeared on her countenance.—" Ah! ir," said she to me, " you have rendered ne a great service."—" Not I," replied " but your reason. You had placed an nfounded confidence in a wretched uggler; and, when you wish it, you vill perhaps discover that you had con-

" ceived an unfounded mistrust in regard " to your husband."—" My God! I " never thought of such a thing, and " he does not suspect it himself; we have " always lived happy together. It is only " within these few days that a woman, " a neighbour of mine, disturbed my " brain by stories for which I never asked " her. But I see how the matter stands " at present. She is the wife of a for- " tune-teller like him we have just " quitted: she boasted to me her hus- " band's knowledge, and she put such " fears into my head only with a view of " inducing me to take some money to " her shop."—" Worthy woman!" re- joined I, " believe my prediction; it is " more infallible than that of the con- " juror: your husband does not deceive " you, I am certain; but reflect that, if " this misfortune should happen to you, " you carry in your arms the best secret " for recalling an inconstant man: a

" wife,

" wife, when she is a mother, has sel-
" dom to fear infidelity." I slipped a crown into her hand, and left her.

When I had proceeded a short distance, I thought I perceived that she was following me with a gesture expressive of benediction, and that, with the other hand, she was wiping away a few tears, which, most assuredly, jealousy no longer caused her to shed. But, Giafar, for one cure which I have effected, how many incurable wounds!

As long as they shall have great cities, vanity will lead thither her legions of adorers: as long as this vanity shall be succeeded by the false shame of not daring to return home when they have spent their money in Paris, or when they have not found there resources for acquiring some, this city will swarm with idle people, whose minds will ferment every morning in order to invent means of existence during the day. How re-

medy this evil? By labour.. But how obtain that labour? By knowing any trade whatever; and this is what the major part of the French never think of teaching their children. They sacrifice all their time in giving to them the *quantum* of understanding necessary for spending much, and know not how to husband for them a single hour for instructing them to acquire a little. If one mentions to them that trivial phrase, "*Take "care that your children know how to "gain their livelihood,*" they knit their brow; their pride is offended. To suppose that their children may one day have occasion to work, appears to them a dishonour; and yet what is working? It is not merely gaining one's livelihood, it is gaining independence.

This maxim for relying for the subsistence of their children on the riches which they will leave to them, a hope so often falsified by effects, a hope which passions,

passions, prodigal expences, reverses of fortune, and unforeseen revolutions, have so often rendered fallacious, and the chimera of which they, more than any other nation, ought at this day to acknowledge; this mania, I say, has inconveniencies which it is impossible for the state not to feel in its administration. What is the most solid resource embraced by the minds of so many, unqualified for any profession? That of endeavouring to obtain places. The state must give an office to a man for this great reason, that that man can do nothing. A fine conclusion! And as there are fewer places than candidates, what happens? It is that the power of things necessarily creates in society a class of solicitors; that from solicitation to intrigue there is but one step, because the noble desire of serving the public good is far less the vehicle of requests than the interested desire of serving one's self;

that necessarily the idea that the office will be granted to the most skilful ought to present itself to men's minds; and that, from that moment, the manner of soliciting, obtaining, and maintaining one's ground when one has obtained, is always to the detriment of generosity of soul, justice of heart, and delicacy of feeling. When there are fewer places than solicitors (and thou mayst easily conceive that I am here alluding to subaltern places only), how many, in order to remove their competitors, have recourse to underhand dealings and concealed treachery! and, when they have succeeded, to how many acts of meanness does not the fear of losing what they have obtained reduce them! According to such an order of things, on the one hand, the public service must be executed with less purity, and, on the other, morality deteriorated; since, in short, if men solicit places like informers,

formers, it is very difficult for them not to keep them like slaves. Reason, methinks, would dictate that the state should offer places to citizens, and not citizens offer themselves to the state for places: then it would be the state that would seek merit, and not the candidates who would make a parade of theirs. But for this it would be necessary that every man should know a trade, the exercise of which might render him easy as to his means of existence. And thus the lowest offices would be considered as an honour, and not as a resource.

LETTER XXI.

THESE Frenchmen, Giafar, sometimes reason very pleasantly, even their moralists. They have said, they still say, and will say, that their assignats have ruined the morals of the nation, and that stock-jobbing has completed their corruption; and I say, saving the respect which I owe to them, that this stock-jobbing has merely proved how much their morals were previously corrupted. Certainly, it was not children, youths, a new generation, in short, whose cupidity took an unfair advantage of assignats to cancel debts the most sacred, to pay bonds, annuities, dowries, and a thousand other obligations on which the fortunes of families depended; it was men who, till then, had, unquestionably, worn the mask of integrity only: as soon as the opportunity occurred, they laid it aside.

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Corruption was therefore effected; a circumstance only had been wanting in which its deformity no longer stood in need of hypocrisy to conceal it. Assignats have not been the cause, they have been no more than the occasion; they have unfolded corruption, but they have not corrupted men; they have merely exposed to view their corrupted condition.

I shall go further: they have, in this instance, rendered service to morality, since they have taught honest men to know and esteem each other; they have procured the consolation of demonstrating the number of these, and of proving that it was still greater than was imagined, or might reasonably be expected; and morals have thence derived this benefit, that assignats have imprinted a hue so odious on those who took an unfair advantage of the circulation of this paper-currency, that, if a similar circum-

stance were to recur, public indignation has been pronounced, in that respect, with such a degree of violence, that the remembrance of it would alone be sufficient to stop criminal dishonesty, did it meditate a repetition of the same conduct. To judge whether a thing is corruptive, we must not stop at the use which may be made of it by corrupted men, but at the spectacle which those men afford in making use of it. Examine then the impression which their conduct will make on the general mass: the more revolting it is, the less corruptive will the thing be in itself. When you place men in this predicament, that, after the event, some, notwithstanding the voice of interest, which speaks to the heart of all, say with pride, "I have not, "I would not have done, and never will "do, what such a one has done," you may safely believe that morality has gained; for, if some have failed, others have strength-

strengthened themselves in integrity; and when society is composed of men who blush, and of men who applaud themselves for not having blushed, at such an action, morals are no longer so greatly corrupted.

I draw no comparison between the man whom the dictates of his infamous cupidity should induce to cancel his debts with assignats, and him whose calculating mind found means to create for himself, by the chances of assignats, a fortune which he had not. The former was a voluntary rogue, fully convinced that he gave a chimerical value only for a real one, and who, gaily bearing the weight of his opprobrium, said to him whom he had robbed, "You "have not the power of being revenged." The latter was nothing more or less than a successful intriguer: he acquired a fortune without a capital, as another man acquires a place without talents. It were better,

better, no doubt, that there were no men of that description, because all wealth, which has neither been founded on economy nor labour, furnishes to society a bad example; but, in short, the acquisition of their fortune was at no person's expense: they dived into circumstances, and not into the purses of other people. In these there is scandal of success; and in those, scandal of roguery, which is widely different. If we wish to feel how much the odium of the conduct of the former prevails over the odium of the conduct of the latter, it is sufficient to reflect that the magistrate, whenever he pleases, may demand of the new Crœsuses an account of their wealth, and that he has no means of reaching that of the others. To the one description of persons, the state can say, "You had "nothing; you now have a great deal: "pay in consequence. In order to en- "rich yourself, you profited by the em- "barrassment

" barrassment in which I was; it is but " just that, in their turn, my embarrass- " ments should profit by the wealth which " is found in your possession." But what will it ask of the other, when they present to it only the same extent of fortune? This fortune has not ostensibly increased, since they have not added to it by their roguery. They had not put the state into the confidence of their debts; they have ruined their creditors; in this they have done no more than increase their inward enjoyments, without increasing, to outward appearance, the bulk of their property, and they can reply to the state, " I ought not to give " you more now than I did formerly, " because I am not richer." And what more revolting than this security of dishonesty, which the groans of its victims cannot disturb, which the state cannot touch in its exigencies, and which the law can neither expose nor repress? It

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is not the modern fortunes that are essentially scandalous, it is the ancient fortunes, the common fortunes, even moderate ones, which have been released from their incumbrances by sums of a chimerical value.

All the declamations against the new Crœsuses are therefore useless and ill-timed. Will fine words prevent that from being which is? Is a man a moralist for thundering against an irreparable evil? O Giafar! I meet with many of these moralists, who are always out of time; they resemble dancers who have no ear for music. They reason like the surgeon called in by a person to set his leg: "There," said he, "is the conse-"quence of want of thought! Who "ever rode over the pavement at full "gallop? I saw you: I would have laid "a hundred to one that you would en-"danger your neck. But tell me how "such a folly could ever enter your "head?

" head? Where was your good sense?
" What was become of your reason?
" Did you not foresee that, if you fell,
" you would break your leg or your
" arm? You are much advanced by your
" speed!"——" Sir, set my leg; I will
" afterwards attend to your lecture."

Those people were not born to be rich, say the moralists; they have enriched themselves in a manner by no means generous. This is dreadful; it is shocking, it calls for vengeance. What men! What times! What an age! Very well; but set my leg. Yes—they are rich: that is a shocking thing, it is whatever you please to call it; but they possess these riches; they will not deprive themselves of them to please you, and, instead of declaiming against them, teach them to make a good use of their wealth.

But a chapter on the art of doing good seldom enters into the lectures on morality

lity given by these gentlemen. They are incessantly talking of virtue, and never find a single one to recommend to the adoption of the new Crœsuses. They have a catalogue of invectives; it is a chapter which they recommence when they have come to the end of it; they reproach them with their low origin, their bad education, their old trades, and their coarse language. Oh! what fine moralists! They will do every thing to make them contemptible, and never do any thing to make them useful. It is in vain to say to them, "In acting thus, you sour men's minds, you awaken and feed their enmity, you perpetuate recollections heart-rending to those whom you affect to pity; and, through the intemperate tenaciousness of your philippics, you render callous the conscience even of those whom you pretend to correct. You will end by rendering insupportable, to those whose fortune has been

been overthrown, a country where the picture of their losses is incessantly retraced to them, and you will succeed in rendering it odious to those whose fortune has been raised, by never shewing to them any other but an enemy's face. They know all this; but of what consequence is it to them?"

Why not sometimes say to them, "You have attached a great merit to wealth, you have sacrificed a great deal, indeed, to the advantage of possessing it; you have imagined it to constitute happiness; but this happiness you enjoy only partially. It is well to have fine estates, fine country-seats, and fine town-houses; it is well to have fine horses, fine carriages, and fine trinkets; it is well to have a good cook, a box at each of the principal theatres, and a pretty mistress; but acknowledge that, notwithstanding all these enjoyments, there are still moments in which your mind is empty, in which

which you are beset by *ennui*, or overwhelmed by want of occupation. You cannot be all day in your carriage; you cannot be constantly at table; you cannot inhabit at once your town-house and your country-seat; the hours at the theatre soon glide away; it is impossible to play at cards from the time you rise till you go to bed: therefore extend the circle of your pleasures, fill those empty spaces which are to be found in the intervals of your enjoyments; make a trial of some recreations which you have not yet tasted.

"For instance, here we are near a manufactory which is in a languid state, and the object of which is important; the consumption, certain; the profits, incontestable. Throw a few bags of your money into this undertaking, not to enrich you more, for one does not find amusement in making calculations, but to prevent him who established it from failing

failing in his engagements, from seeing himself reduced to misery, from making away with himself, perhaps, in order to avoid the grievous spectacle of indigence, and the tears of his wife and children. Think well of him for having had a bright idea of public prosperity, which, without you, he cannot realize; spare your country the trouble and expence of going to seek abroad that which industry, opportunely encouraged, might procure at home. You cannot conceive with what agreeable thoughts the certainty of having consolidated the fortune of an intelligent and honest man stocks the imagination! What an enchanting amusement is the activity of fifty, a hundred, two hundred persons, for whom you procure work! To-morrow, perhaps, you will experience an indigestion from the skill of your cook; to-morrow, those fine horses, of which you are so proud, will run away with you, and overturn

you into a ditch; to-morrow, the rubber which you have won to-day will occasion you to lose all the property you may carry about you: not one of your diversions is without alloy, nor without reverse. But to-morrow, in a month, in ten years, you will still find those artisans at the trade which they owed to your assistance. Their smiles will announce your arrival; the serenity of their countenance will attest your presence; and their benedictions will signalize your departure. There are no chances to be feared in this happiness; it never changes.

" Are you desirous to vary your pleasures? Charge me with their arrangement. I have an imagination as fertile as all the directors of *Frascati* and *Tivoli*. In order to captivate you, those pleasures must be seasoned by mystery. Well, follow me; let us ascend to that sixth story. Have you a few pieces of gold in your

your pocket? Hasten to enjoy: throw them on that truckle-bed: see health revive on the brow of that extenuated old man! see milk restored to the bosom of that mother, till now implored in vain by those expiring children! see sweet hope bring colour back to the cheeks of that youth, whose forlorn and destitute situation presaged his approaching dissolution. That infectious straw, moistened by tears, and on which neither repose nor sleep ever dwelt, has disappeared. You have said a word only, and wholesome blankets have been placed between the blasts of winter and the delicate limbs of that widow and those orphans; you have made a gesture only, and the first bread has been eaten under this roof without exciting a sigh. Are my promises vain? Are you satisfied with the arranger of your pastimes? With the wand which I placed in your hands, you have created health, peace, happiness, joy, and plenty:

you

you amused yourself only like the rest of mankind, I have procured you the amusements of the gods. What makes you reflect? Ah! you are seeking whether you have created gratitude. Of what consequence is that to you? Gratitude frequently communicates to the pleasures of a benefactor that constraint which etiquette spreads in the midst of entertainments. If some power in nature had a right to prohibit gratitude in the person obliged, it ought to be the benefactor: to him it is the quarter of an hour of Rabelais; it is the bill presented to him of his expenses.

Of what use is it to you to have great estates, to be able to say, when you are in the balcony of one of your country-mansions, All that my eye embraces belongs to me; it cannot reach the horizon without still measuring my domains? If pride is a pleasure, certainly this view amuses you. You shake your head:

nead: pride is out of the question, you say. But what is it then? Ah! I understand: the great enjoyment is in the moment when your tenants bring you the produce of this vast extent of country? You smile: 'tis that. Yes; I conceive that such a moment has great charms, but it returns only every three months, and how do you pass your time during those three months? I am afraid that *ennui* takes possession of you. Quick, an entertainment! I propose to you a rural wedding, over which you shall preside. Do you see that little spot of uncultivated land? Do you observe, a little farther on, a robust man, to whom nature gave nothing that he could call his own but the sweat of his brow, and who cannot always find an opportunity to dispose of it? Do you wish to amuse yourself? Marry this man to that land: unite to that virgin, eager to bring forth, labour, which seeks only to fecundify. Lose no

time: hasten the hour of your pleasu
build a pretty cottage, convenient, s
ing, and healthy; that will form
dowry of the bride; add to it a ploug
spade, a rake, a horse, and an ass; t
will be the wedding presents of
bridegroom: erect a granary in w
you will lodge the first corn he will s
that will be the nuptial bed: forget
a little barn; for there must need
a cradle for the first batch of child
But the wedding being over, you
the return of *ennui*. Ah! my g
friend! is remembrance nothing? T
good is to sow an harvest for mem
Stop; here come your tenants; s
with them. Do you not find that
three months have glided away
quickly during this last quarter?

"And then do you think my ge
exhausted? Do I not perceive on
bank of that river an appropriate si
tion for the construction of a charm
villa

illage? Let a cluster of twenty or thirty retty houses embellish that landscape! 'ou are fond of the theatre, methinks; ell, there's the most delightful scenery. What a sweet harmony is the noise of he looms with which you are on the oint of filling those agreeable asylums! low it has banished for ever the melanholy silence which reigned in this soliude! What grace, what life in those umerous skiffs which the happy and eaceful inhabitants have launched into hat water! Behold the helping oars onducting towards the cities the proluctions of your little colony. Ah! you ave improved on the arrangement of ny entertainment; wonderfully well I hank you for having enriched with a litle temple, dedicated to the Eternal, that miling abode of industry: the idea of a rotecting God gives majesty to the busy cene of manufactories. Let idleness ay, let it call itself pious: 'tis a false-

hood; it is nothing more than sacrilegious. That little temple rises in a tasteful manner. What skilful architect has seconded your intentions? What learned pencil has decorated its arches and walls? What able chisel has sculptured those figures? To the agreeable pleasures of my rural and industrious entertainments, to the delightful sights which you have found means to create for yourself under the roof of indigence, you have also associated the charms diffused by the arts. Continue, and you will no longer be a prey to *ennui*. Without disturbing yourself, suffer orators to declaim against the source of your wealth; you know how to employ it honourably: you are worthy of possessing it. But if you remain insensible to the pleasures which I propose to you, riches will dishonour you, as much as you dishonour riches."

Dost thou think, Giafar, that, in a country where all fortunes have changed hands,

ıds, this moral would not be better ɲ that moralizing satire of which so ɔroper a use is made? When the wind ıot the best that the mariner could h, what is the wisest conduct he can ow? Is it to curse the wind that blows, to turn it to the best possible advan- e? Good night.

LETTER XXII.

IF according to the inevitable and fatal law which ordains that every thing should perish, the world was to behold, in ages the remoteness of which it is impossible to foresee, the French language survive the nation itself, and become to the people of those times, still hidden in the bosom of futurity, a classic language, as the Greek and Latin are at this day to the learned world, it is difficult to divine where would end the disputes which would then arise between commentators. "Heaven send, for the tranquillity of the "republic of letters," said to me a man of good sense, "that, in those future "ages, the immense number of inscrip- "tions which you perceive over all the "doors of those warehouses, may, at that "period, be so deeply buried in the "bowels of the earth, that no researches

"may

" may reproduce them to the sight of the
" learned then living! Most certainly,
" it will never occur to them that, in the
" first city of France, in the city the
" most celebrated in this age of know-
" ledge, from its taste for the arts, for
" its urbanity, and from its atticism, it
" has been suffered that the major part
" of the inscriptions which the citizens
" place on the front of their habitations
" to indicate what is the nature of their
" industry, should wound propriety, in-
" sult reason, and outrage the language
" in its principles the most generally
" known. Fortunate would it be too if
" these species of signs were always
" painted or written on wood: hopes
" might be entertained that the humi-
" dity of winters, the snow, the rain, the
" worms, and the drying heat of twenty
" summers, would soon reduce them to
" dust, and that these marks of folly
" would never reach posterity. But show

" and ignorance are not unfrequently
" blended; and these absurd inscriptions
" sometimes shine on letters of gold on
" a ground of marble."

" Would you believe," said he to me,
" that, a few years before the revolution
" I saw, in order to announce to the
" public, to travellers, and to foreigners,
" a very handsome ready-furnished ho-
" tel, which the proprietor had thought
" proper to call *Hôtel de la Reine*; that
" I saw," said he, " on a large piece of
" black marble this inscription thus en-
" graved: *Hôtelle de la Reyne?* Well!
" if on a far distant day, as I was suppos-
" ing just now, the French tongue should
" become a learned tongue, if people
" should apply themselves to the study
" of this dead language, as we apply our-
" selves to that of the celebrated nations
" of antiquity; and if, by chance, some
" archæologist should happen to dig up
" this marble, do you foresee the difficul-
" ties,

"ties, the contestations, the quarrels "which will arise among the learned, "and how many volumes the illiteracy of "a house-painter will cause to be writ- "ten, and how much time it will occa- "sion to be lost by grave academies?" Is it presumed that a day may come when academies will have nothing on earth to do, by thus husbanding for them beforehand materials of dispute, much in the same manner as nations of Punic-faith slip into their treaties of peace some evasions, and captious expressions, in order to rekindle the flame of war?

Who knows? to this indifference in regard to signs, the orthography of which is so ungrammatical, is attached, perhaps, some human respect for the title of academician. Why not? Is not this title a sign? The academicians, whose merit justifies that title, resemble signs correctly spelt; but what do those resemble who possess not this merit? If

no attention is paid to the correction of signs, will not the operation go farther than might be wished?

Have I not told thee elsewhere, Giafar, that I would one day explain to thee what was an academy? In an enlightened nation it is, or ought to be, an assemblage of all the men the most distinguished in the sciences, in literature, and in the arts. To decide whether this object is really accomplished, and whether the composition of an academy is conformable to this spirit, one must not, especially in France, always consult the public; for, naturally malicious, they are constantly inclined to laugh at those who are presented to them as prodigies in their species: one must still less rely on the learned, on literary characters, and on artists, who belong not to this academy; for mortified self-love would unavoidably have no small share in their answer. "What manner then must be

"adopted

"adopted to pronounce?" asked I, addressing myself to a man with whom I was conversing. "The sole question," answered he, "is to examine what are the ordinary means to obtain a seat there, or, to make myself better understood, what is the accustomed mode for opening the door to those who are not already admitted. If the academy goes in quest of men, it is evident that the composition will always be good; if men go in quest of the academy, alloy will be inevitable. I am here speaking in a general way only, and I have no intention to apply these reflections to any academy in Europe; I am merely speaking as if the idea of the formation of an academy struck me for the first time, and as if I was consulted on the best principles to be adopted for the chapter of the regulations relative to the reception of members; and as it would be for the greater fame of these learned bodies, it ought to

be forbidden that any man should display any other pretensions to a place in an academy than the splendour of his talents, and that it was by the noise alone of his reputation that he should be permitted to express his wish to obtain a seat there. When an academy had a vacant place to dispose of, it ought not to have the power of opening a competition of candidates; but it ought to cast its eyes on the men who employ themselves on the progress of human knowledge, it ought to weigh their different degrees of merit, and, in short, elect him whom it should believe to have reached the degree of excellence fit to be elected. Thus, it would always make a good choice, because it is natural to think that men of real merit would be cautious not to admit any but their equals.

"It would then happen that a person would be admitted into the academy at the moment when he least expected, and that

that he would not have lost, in soliciting the favour of being received, a time which it would be more proper and more useful to employ in deserving admission. If a contrary plan were adopted, I am of opinion that the inconveniences would be greater than the advantages. I suppose, for instance, that an academy should reason thus: The honour of being received into my bosom is well worth the trouble of being sought after and requested: present yourself, enter your name as a candidate, I shall afterwards examine whether I ought to grant your request. I shall not stop to examine whether this tone of superiority be proper or not, but I shall only say that this mode may be attended with consequences by no means satisfactory; and in the first place, the more real merit a man has, the more he doubts it himself, and from this doubt arises an honourable modesty. He therefore interweaves round his head the twofold

twofold fame of his talent and his modesty. Though diffident of himself, he has not less a confidence in his powers; though knowing the limits which his modesty ought to have, he is not less convinced of the lustre which it still adds to his superior knowledge. Expect not, therefore, that he should take any step capable of depreciating both: namely, on the one hand, his superiority, by putting himself on a list where his name, being placed with many others, would expose him to a sort of comparison with persons who would be inferior to him, and would make him run the risk of caprice; and on the other hand, his modesty, by contradicting, by the species of vanity of this inscription of his name, his accustomed reserve in regard to the extent of his knowledge. Never expect, that a man of real delicacy will resolve to make, without repugnance, that acknowledgment, as it were, public, of his high opinion

opinion in regard to his own merit. I am far from censuring those who might triumph over this repugnance: a thousand reasons might determine them; but it may happen, in short, that a man never gets the better of it; thus he is, through the defect in the mode of reception, irrevocably deprived of his most honourable recompense; while the academy itself loses the advantage of possessing a man who would do it honour.

"The question the most fatal to the fame of these learned bodies that can be put by the public, is when they are justified in asking, Why does not such a man belong to the academy, and why does such another belong to it? What I have just been saying proves that it may sometimes happen that they may have a right to ask the first part of this question; what I am going to add will prove that they may also acquire the right of asking the second.

"If

"If a list of candidates is allowed, if it is even required as a preliminary condition, men of abilities not above mediocrity will not hesitate to inscribe their names on it: for one vacancy will be seen fifty competitors; and it would scarcely be possible to select from this list the names of two or three men of merit, I mean with respect to talents. In the first place, a sort of ridicule will thence recoil on the academy itself from the allusions which the weakness of the candidates will furnish to public malignity: it will thence result, too, that the man of merit will congratulate himself secretly on having resisted the watchful eagerness of setting down his name on the list, and consequently of having avoided being comprised in the epigrams aimed, in general, at this body of candidates; and thence his aversion to this mode of election will increase more and more. Is it not, in the next place, evident that the

the academy, by requiring this inscription of names, will in fact have imposed on itself the obligation of examining the titles of all those who should inscribe themselves on the list; and most assuredly this will be a time very gratuitously lost, since such a man might set down his name, on whom the academy never had the most distant idea of fixing their attention. Lastly, and this would be a serious inconvenience, for morality is interested in it, may it not be asked, Whether, in bringing together in this manner a certain number of men to dispute for the same place, it is not opening between them a silent, secret, and cruel contest, by permitting them to indulge the hope of arriving at a rank to which they would never have ventured to aspire? Is it not, in some measure, emboldening them to employ, against their rivals, unjust criticisms, affected contempt, and calumny even to dispossess them?

them? Is it not, as it were, recommending to them to use all the resources of intrigue, flattery, and empty praise, to captivate their judges? And if there is a possibility that some among them should succeed in imposing on truth, on power, and on their protectors, is it not obvious that the academy, thinking to have adopted only a method of enlightening itself respecting the merit of such or such an individual, will find itself insensibly influenced in regard to the choice which it must make, will not perceive that it has given the place to the least deserving till it will be too late to remedy the mistake, and will find itself, in spite of its most upright intentions, the object of public sarcasms, of the resentment of the rejected candidates, and of the indifference of men of real talent, who, after a similar catastrophe, would be cautious to avoid the disgrace attending it?

"Supposing

"Supposing that such a mode could be adopted by any academy whatever, it would be said, in its justification, that it is the only mean by which it could ascertain the real intention of those whose titles for being received into it are valid; to save it from the reproach of forgetting the men who possess those titles; and to spare its dignity the mortification of nominating as members any who would, perhaps, refuse that honour. These objections would all be equally frivolous: first, the academy would not thus know the intentions of the distinguished men whom it might wish to honour by its choice. I have just proved that the more merit a man has, the more averse would he be to come and say, as it were, publicly, I have merit: think of me. Is it not very right to leave him the noble pride of relying on the lustre of his fame! By obliging him to set down his name, it is silently doing him a sort

a sort of injury, it is putting him beneath his reputation: now, if the form in itself prevents him from expressing his wish, it will not be known, and the academy will have succeeded only in knowing, not the intention, but the pretensions, or (to express myself more correctly) the ordinary confidence of mediocrity; and that is not, most unquestionably, what concerns it.

"But it might be said that the academy is desirous to avoid the reproach of forgetting men worthy to share its honours. It has just been seen that, by the very form, it would have laid itself under the necessity of forgetting them constantly; but were that not the case, why should its memory be less tenacious in regard to the men of its own nation than it is or would be with respect to the illustrious men of foreign countries? Suppose, for a moment, that it should wish to elect some of the latter, would

it

it be seen to open a register in which they should be obliged to inscribe their names? It might, without recurring to that expedient, very well discern those on whom it ought to confer this favour; it would not fear that the public voice should rise against its decisions; its sagacity would not betray it respecting the most deserving choice. Why then should its judgment be more at fault in regard to its countrymen? Why more restrictions in the justice which it might owe to them than in that which it would grant to foreigners? Why would it deprive them of the charm attached to the dignity of this thought? I was called; while it would secure enjoyment entire to the learned of other climates. What then! it would find means to appreciate the merit of a man whom a distance of three, four, or five hundred leagues should separate from its frontiers, and it would require a special request to awaken

awaken it respecting that of a man who lives at its door!

"Would not this difference in the manner of proceeding imply a contradiction in principles, and would not the one be a just criticism on the other? But," add the defenders of the system which I am discussing, "ought not the academy, above all, to think of its dignity, and is it not sensible that it would be committed by the refusal of an individual whom it should have chosen? And in what way then? It seems to me that dishonour is entirely on the side of him who rejects a favour of which all celebrated men are proud. Is there any valid excuse for refusing such an honour? Can a man be placed in such a predicament, that his vanity can be gratified by such a refusal? And can it be imagined, besides, that similar refusals would be so common? And if, at remote periods, some were to occur, can any one think that

that the public would not inquire into the motives of it; and that, if they should find out, by chance, that party spirit had alone dictated this absurd refusal, they would not make the shame of it recoil entirely on the man who should have rendered himself culpable, and, on the contrary, grant all its esteem to the learned body, which, by this very nomination, should have shewn itself superior to all empty considerations of opinion."

Such, my dear Giafar, are the serious reflections to which the playful remark on absurd signs insensibly led the rational man with whom I was in conversation. As he constantly affected to argue by supposition, I would not put any restraint on his veracity by endeavouring to penetrate indiscreetly his thoughts, in order to learn whether his observations applied to any learned body in France. I merely took the liberty of asking him a few questions respecting the

the origin of those academies. "I shall say nothing to you," replied he, "of that of the word academy, with which every one is acquainted; I shall only remark, by the way, that the moderns give to it, in my opinion, an acceptation entirely different from that given to it by the ancients. By academy, they meant the meeting of a few philosophers; and among the moderns, an academy is frequently nothing less than a meeting of philosophers. The two ideas, however, have this point of contest, that the academicians of antiquity formed a sect, and that this title of sect might have sometimes suited modern academies. In imitation of all sects, there were certainly some academies subject to errors; they now and then had the same intolerance, prepossessions, persecuting spirit, and even fanaticism. All deserve not this reproach, but all have had an inclination for dominion. That ought to be.

Being

ng created by authority, academies
st contract something of the cha-
:er of their creators. Authority said
hem on creating them, " I order you
o enlighten." Consequently, acade-
:s were likely to say to mankind,
'ou shall be enlightened as we shall
rder." And by what right? By the
it which every delegate of supreme
hority receives from the authority
n which delegates him to govern in
own way in the branch entrusted to
1. The solution is not without im-
tance; for here is knowledge in the
ids of authority. It seems to me,
wever, that knowledge ought to ascend
m mankind towards authority, and
t descend from authority towards man-
id. This inverse progress perfectly
plains literary phenomena: thence,
e condemnation of the Cid; thence,
e panegyric of St. Lewis and of Riche-
u during a hundred and fifty years;

thence, so many prizes granted, and so many prizes refused; thence, so many men rejected, and so many men admitted: thence, in short, so many strange things which have happened.

Charlemagne had an academy in his palace. This trial cast no ridicule on Charlemagne, though it did on the age in which he lived. On the contrary, Richelieu, in creating an academy, alone attracted the ridicule of it, and did honour to his time. The reason is, that Charlemagne, in creating his academy, had in view nothing but literature, and Richelieu nothing but his self-love. Charlemagne brought to light only the slenderness of the knowledge of his time, and Richelieu displayed only the vanity of his. Under Charlemagne, men were beneath his idea; and under Richelieu, they were above: and although both had furnished their academy with ridiculous personages, although there

was

no difference between Colletet who
k the title of Thucydides, and young
bert who entitled himself Homer,
of Charlemagne was likely to perish,
use, in short, he had chosen the first
of his time, and that of Richelieu
rosper, because he had called in the
t ordinary ones of his, and because,
he latter case, all the materials for
roving were consequently ready;
reas, in the former, they were totally
ting.

t all times, academies have either
n too much censured or too much
ed. I do not think that the true
on of these two excesses has been
tly perceived. It is not, methinks,
he labours of academies: in general,
y were much more deserving of esti-
ion than enthusiasm; but they never
ended so low as to merit contempt.
refore, infatuation and censure were
lly unjust; the one, because it was

prejudicial to esteem; and the other, because it wholly refused it. We must therefore seek this reason elsewhere; it will not be difficult to be found; and it is because, to form an academy, an improper course has always been taken. Authority wills that there should be an academy; in this every authority is in the right. A similar institution reflects a lustre on states: it is the public exhibition of their riches for the advancement of knowledge; it is the most honourable part of the show allowed to powerful and civilized nations. But, in order that this should be in fact, what ought the government to do? It must say, "I or- "der that there should be an academy, "and I mean that this academy should "be composed of so many members, "forty, fifty, a hundred, if it pleases, "and that it should stop at that num- "ber." And who then shall name them? That will not be difficult: the govern-

ment

ment must say to the whole body of men who profess literature, sciences, and arts, "It is your business: you know "the most deserving; you yourselves "choose, and nominate." You will then see truth pronounce. You will not hear the man of mediocrity say, "It is to me "this honour belongs:" he will not dare to say so; but he will say, "It belongs "to such a one." Neither will the man of merit name himself, because he will be sure that the public voice will point him out. The government will not even have occasion to require that this grand jury should put the question to the vote: it will be sufficient for them to listen to the conversations of the day, and in these conversations they will hear, "It "is such a one, such a one, and such a "one, who ought to be members." But if the government names them, how will it then be on its guard against the pretensions of courtiers, a class to be found

in the sciences, in literature, and in the arts, as well as every where else; against the solicitations of women, always praising to excess the merit of their *protégés*, and whose approbation is so easily captivated by a sonnet or a portrait; against the predilections of men of power; against the suggestions, the prepossessions, and the prejudices, in short, of those whom it must necessarily employ to organize this institution? It will therefore happen, in spite of itself, in spite even of its excellent intentions, that government will assemble none but incongruous, incoherent, and, perhaps, insignificant elements; and were there but one bad choice to be found among those which it should have made, that would be sufficient to excite murmurs, discontent, blame, and irony, against the whole of the members. How many people, a hundred and fifty years even after the nomination made by Cardinal Richelieu, always fancied, in

in coming to attend the meetings of the French academy, that they still met with Colletet! How many people, at the same period, lavished on their side incense on the French academy, because Richelieu had there placed Gombaud; and this recollection inspired them with the hope of stealing into it some day! It will result from this defect that any academy whatever will never do half the good which it might, because the public will be divided into two portions; the one that will withhold from it every sort of confidence, the other that will always bestow its admiration even on what it will do amiss. In mixing too much alloy in a coin, it necessarily loses its credit. It is the same with an academy: let but one grain of lead be mixed with it, nothing but lead will be talked of; and that alone will be sufficient to cause the gold to be forgotten. Such is the world. You see then that my compari-

son of the title of academician, with the signs ill spelt, was not so extravagant, relatively to some persons.

A sign-painter was one day employed to write on the door of a wine-merchant, in the vicinity of the Louvre, this phrase: MAGAZIN DE VINS FINS; and he had written, *Magazin de vins* FAINS. He was still at work, when an artist, of a disposition rather jocose, passing by, perceived the fault. He approached this man, and addressing him in a whisper, as if he was afraid of humbling him, "My friend," said he, "you have made "a mistake; people will laugh at you, "you have written *vins* FAINS: that is "not as it ought to be; you must put "*vins* FEINTS." The tone, at once serious and persuasive, with which he gave this advice humorously treacherous, inspired the sign-painter with lively gratitude: he thanked him sincerely for this service, and, hastening to efface his first fault,

fault, failed not to write in large letters, "*Magazin de vins* FEINTS." Wouldst thou believe that, during six months at least, neither the stigma which such an inscription drew on the wine-merchant, nor the humorous idea which it incessantly presented to the mind of the public, suggested the idea of removing the sign; and that, though all Paris laughed on passing this warehouse, that did not prevent people from coming to it to purchase or drink these *fictitious* wines with an immoveable tranquillity.

Now make the application: Do not the persons who succeed in causing a man without talents to be nominated to an academy, resemble that man who writes a sign without knowing the words which ought to render it correct? Is not the pleasant fellow whose advice led him to substitute an epigrammatic word to an improper one, represented by the public? And is not the title of academician,

mician, due to such a promotion, the sign which excites the laughter of all the passengers?

For a long time was there not seen, on a sign, the favourite bird of Leda pressing a crucifix to its bosom with an expression of love equal to that which he formerly lavished on the mother of Castor? Who would think what was meant by this impertinent stroke of impiety: *au signe* (cygne) *de la croix?* Has not the front of a shop been seen to offer a picture representing a monkey wrapped up in a piece of white cloth? The meaning of this was: *Au Saint Jean-Baptiste (au singe en batiste)**.

* Similar blunders have been exhibited on the sign-posts in our own metropolis, and are in the recollection of the reader. The twenty-eighth number of the Spectator, and the eighteenth of the Tatler, are humorous essays on the careless orthography and whimsical coincidencies they display. The BELL and SAVAGE for the *Belle Sauvage;* and the BULL and MOUTH, for the *Mouth* (or port) of *Boulogne*, are among these curiosities.

"You

"You see," continued the critic, "how far the comparison may be carried between men who usurp the title of academicians and ridiculous shop-signs. To point out the sign most sacred among christians by the deplorable pun presented by the association of the name of a bird with one of the instruments the most revered in their worship; to couple the name of an animal with that of a species of linen, in order to compose with them indecorously the name of one of the men the most famous among the founders of a religion; do not such instances of folly present to the mind an idea perfectly similar to that suggested by seeing a man without talents seated among those whose superiority we are accustomed to admire? Do not the man who has no other qualification for an academician than the diploma which he holds in his hand, and the animal that has no other con-

nexion with religion than the cross which it holds between its feet, equally provoke laughter, when one discovers the scent of the enigma? And does the monkey, which is indebted to a covering of cambric for the honour of figuring in the place of the precursor of Christ, offend truth more than the empty being who owes to the possession of an academic chair the glory of being called the brother of Racine?"

The critic left me, and carried elsewhere his good sense and his bile; I say his good sense, because he appeared to me to display not a little when he attached himself to the mode of admission only: I say his bile, because his applications appeared to me not exempt from it. There are men, and they are common enough here, who are much more intent on taking the bad than the good side of things: they think they perceive defects in the best institutions, and perceive

ceive not that the defect is in their own self-love, much more than in the object of their censure. It is, above all, in the class which, by its profession even ought to be the best informed, that is, among the learned, the literati, and the artists, that this self-love is here the most irritable. Among themselves, they overlook not inferiority more than superiority of merit: the former, which ought to excite indulgence only, inspires them with nothing but disdain; the latter, which ought to fill them with admiration only, inflames them with nothing but jealousy. They thus make for themselves a punishment of the very talents which they received from nature, or acquired by study, and which were given to them only to constitute the charm of their life. As soon as they have attained a name, it should seem that they divest themselves of the character of man to clothe themselves with that of woman; they assume the coquetry, the little rivality,

vality, and the little treacheries of the latter. Scarcely is there a tenth of those men who compose the republic of letters, that a sound judgment, a natural sentiment of uprightness, and an enlightened philosophy, place above that deplorable defect whose unfortunate power poisons the enjoyment of all the rest.

Shouldst thou imagine, Giafar, that it is the well-informed public whose opinion assigns, in the first instance at least, degrees of rank to the literati, thou art deceived. No doubt, in the long run, this public come to exercise that right with the empire which belongs to them; but what a lapse of time before the day of justice arrives! Every man of science, every man of letters, every artist, sees for a long while between him and the public, men of science, men of letters, artists, not unfrequently his enemies; this is a barrier which he must overleap. He experiences much less uneasiness from

from the opinion that the public will have of his work than from the opinion that will be given of it by his peers. In general, who, in the sciences, raises his voice at first against discoveries? It is the men of science. In literature, whence issues the first indiscreet expression against a work, the first shaft of malice, the first epigram, the first disgrace, if it is not from men of letters? In the arts, who is most forward to mislead (if I may venture to use the expression) the still unsettled taste of the public respecting a new production? The artists. You never hear any of the classes of men just mentioned blame in an open manner; their first phrase is almost always an eulogium. But the dreadful arsenal of BUTS is opened with all its thunderbolts: its discharges are long; and till the blessed NO MATTER of the public comes to impose silence on this deafening artillery of BUTS, anxiety and anguish of mind are rudely felt. Listen

to

to them, they will all complain of the misfortunes of this intestine war; follow them, you will see that all of them are soldiers engaged in it.

"If you have a child," said the critic to me during our conversation, "and you wish that he should conceive none but rational notions concerning certain objects, take him not into the streets abounding with shops decorated with signs; for he will imagine that towers are of *silver*, that apples are of *gold*, that crows are *white*, that monkies are *green*, that cats wear *boots*, that women are *without a head*, and that the king of Prussia is *a blackamoor*. If you wish him to imbibe a just idea of the sweets attached to the culture of knowledge, take him not among certain men of science, certain men of letters, and certain artists; for he will think that the sciences are cultivated by *bears*; literature, by *cats*; and the arts, by *adders*."

LETTER XXIII.

YESTERDAY, Giafar, was a public festival: I love institutions of this nature. I am told that the national festivals of the present day have no analogy to those formerly observed: so much the worse for the ancient ones. In former times, events recalled to mind festivals; at this day, festivals recall to mind events: they were formerly a consequence agreed on of a supposed joy; to-day they are a consequence acknowledged of known greatness. Thus, the former constituted no more than a date; while the latter constitute a monument. What would almost prove that the events formerly celebrated by public festivals were not always a real object of national rejoicing, is, that the French then had no established festivals.

Be

Be this as it may, having not seen the ancient festivals, I know not whether the modern be preferable; but such as they are, they are proper, although, in my opinion, it were still possible to improve them. But, in short, do this for the people, it is for the people that the government makes arrangements on these occasions with decorum, with a sort of gravity, with a species of serious dignity, which almost borders on respect; and though it were with an unreserved respect, who could complain of it? A man never perceives so well that the people is nothing more than the whole mass of the nation, and he never knows so perfectly that he makes a part of this people, as in national festivals. What madman would therefore be offended at respect being strongly expressed at those times? Do persons take offence at being honoured? There are madmen of that description.

It is only by the elevation of genius that a correct judgment is formed of the style the most noble for grand edifices. It is the same when the question concerns a nation as a body: an elevated mind is necessary to discern what homage is the most proper to be paid to it. Fire-works, illuminations, dances, gymnastic games, races in which the conquerors are nobly crowned, all this, in the opinion of certain persons, is not to be called thinking of the people: by their account, it is necessary to make them eat and drink, and to throw money to them. They have two motives for reasoning thus; as they would not eat, nor stoop to pick up this money, it would be seen, that they are not of the class of the people. Those men and I do not understand each other: in my mind, it is not thinking of the people to debase them. Neither am I fond of throwing

open

open the playhouses *gratis*: amusements must not be a charity.

Among the numerous and magnificent decorations of this festival, I remarked a superb temple dedicated to Industry. No people have a greater claim to the worship of that goddess. In point of industry, Europe is a great body, of which France is the Minerva: it is from this head that issues every conception; it is in this brain that is wrought every thing grand, useful, productive, and agreeable in the arts, sciences, trades, and inventions. And in this comparison, Giafar, nothing insolent is meant towards other nations; for it is in France that originated this fine thought, that *the universe is the country of the man whose labours of any kind are for the benefit of human nature.* Whatever may be the climate which gave him birth, a useful man is a Frenchman in the eyes of a Frenchman.

I must

I must declare it with frankness: in every thing that can do honour to the genius of the human species there is no nation more worthily a rival of other nations than the French; for it is not jealous: therefore it stifles nothing.

The life spread in this country by the astonishing and generous activity of industry is such, that here the aspect of a person voluntarily idle is more extraordinary than revolting: it is a man seated in a street who is remarked only because every one there is moving. I examined that temple which I mentioned to you just now: I admired its rich and elegant architecture; I surveyed with delight its immense porticos; I studied with attention the ingenious bas-reliefs with which they were decorated; and the allegories with which the statuary had adorned the altar of the goddess. A man, who appeared to be actuated by the same curiosity, frequently expressed his approbation, some-

" give, in that respect, very good advice,
" and were the government to take a
" fancy to consult me sometimes, it
" would not find itself the worse; but I
" never concern myself about all this. I
" am like those men who, quietly seated
" on the sea-shore, enjoy with delight
" the spectacle of the majestic agitation
" of the billows; but to experience
" myself that agitation, I am not at all
" inclined. If you meet me here, it is
" by chance; it is the festival that at-
" tracts me. Besides, one may, once a
" year, derogate from one's mode of life."
—" Pray, sir, what may be the mode of
" life of a man so charmed at the sight
" of a temple dedicated to Industry, if it
" has no relation to that very industry?"
" I have already told you, sir, that my ad-
" vice was very good: few days pass
" without my speaking on that subject:
" and I am listened too, I may venture to
" say, with attention."—" Ah! I see
" that

" that I was not mistaken in my conjec-
" tures; you are member of some cham-
" ber of commerce or of some council."
....." By no means. It is not always
" merit that is sought after; and every
" thing duly examined, offices are, per-
" haps, no more than a slavery of which
" I am little ambitious."—" But, in
" short"—" No: my life is quite simple;
" in two words I will describe it to you;
" I have no reason to conceal it. I have
" an annual income of a hundred and
" twenty louis, and am a batchelor. I
" have none of the embarrassments in
" which a man is involved by house-
" keeping, a wife, and children. I have
" subjected all my actions to an invari-
" able order. Order! that is my su-
" preme being. I rise exactly at eight
" o'clock; my hair-dresser comes, and I
" dress myself. At nine precisely I go
" out; I repair to my favourite coffee-
" house. There I seat myself, break-

" fast, and read the papers. Some per-
" sons drop in; we enter into conversa-
" tion. The clock strikes two; I take
" my cane, gloves, and hat: I go to din-
" ner. At three I return, and take my
" coffee. Some discussion arises; I am
" appealed to as an arbiter, and my ver-
" dict is final. At five, I play at domino;
" at nine I drink a bottle of beer, and read
" the evening paper. At eleven, the
" waiters give notice that they are going
" to fasten the doors: I once more take
" my cane, gloves, and hat, and go to
" bed."—" Unquestionably, you are in
" the right, sir; no man can lead a more
" regular life. But by what accident
" have you interrupted this admirable or-
" der? for it seems to me that you have
" not spoken, in the details which you
" have given, of——"—" Of walking,
" you mean."—" Exactly so."—" Oh!
" there is no man in the world who does
" not sometimes relax from the rigour of

" his

his principles. I indulge in these little—gay excursions twice or thrice a year; and then to-morrow, the day after, or some of these days, is it not possible that, in the coffee-house I frequent, a question may arise respecting the decorations of this festival? Who will be consulted? I shall, no doubt. I must needs have seen with my own eyes." "I understand; you are the oracle of this coffee-house."—"I would not say it, but you have."—"Thus, whenever the conversation turns on arts, commerce, agriculture, legislation."—"Do you doubt it?"—"God forbid I should. Did I not see you just now in raptures with the beauty of that temple erected in honour of Industry; and it is evident that you had an incontestable right to admire it. According to the life you lead, a temple dedicated to Industry must be a very important object to you; and certainly, were a nation

" composed of men who lived as you do
" it is not to be doubted that it would
" make a great progress in that branch.
" But, in short, we do not come into the
" world inspired with science. You are
" consulted, you say, in preference; you
" resolve all questions perfectly well; I
" am willing to think so: however, to
" have arrived at that high degree of
" knowledge, you must needs not have
" lived always as you do at present: you
" must."—" Sir, since I was eighteen
" years of age, I have not varied: I left
" college, where, thank God, I had never
" learned any thing of all that trash of
" Greek and Latin which was there
" taught. I had unfortunately lost my
" father and mother in my infancy. My
" guardian left me master of my destiny:
" every six months he paid me punctually
" my little income. I was not fond of a
" military life, because blood is a sight
" unpleasant to me; I was not fond of

" the

" the law, because a judge may condemn
" the innocent; I was not fond of trade,
" because one may, without wishing it,
" be hurried into unjust speculations; I
" was not fond of agriculture, because
" to me the country is tiresome; I was
" not fond of marriage, because one may
" have a wicked wife; I was not fond of
" study, because not unfrequentlyo ne
" furnishes one's head only to oblige the
" ungrateful; I was not fond of public
" places, because it is sometimes very hot
" at the theatre: I was very fond of
" coffee; I came to take a cup every day
" at the house which I still frequent.
" Within these forty years, it has changed
" its master ten times; ten times have its
" customers been renewed; I alone have
" remained immoveable. When my
" guardian settled accounts with me, my
" income amounted to fifteen thousand
" francs. I have realized the capital.
" Nothing is so frightful as selfishness;

" but a man must sometimes think of
" himself. I have sunk this money in
" the purchase of an annuity, and thereby
" secured for myself a hundred and
" twenty louis a year. I have had the
" good fortune to save my income amid
" the storms of the revolution, because
" I had placed it on private individuals;
" and here I am."—" From what you
" say, I see, without much difficulty, that
" you are equally conversant in the arts,
" in politics, in laws, and a thousand
" other things, as in industry; and I am
" sensible that the hints of a man who
" has never learned any thing may be of
" as much importance to his country as
" the life of a man endowed with such
" good reasons as you for not having
" chosen to do any thing can be of
" utility to it."—" I should have been
" a great fool to puzzle my brain in
" learning any thing. Have I not, for
" these forty years, read at least four
" journals

" journals or newspapers every morning:
" therefore I know as much as the first
" statesman."—" Are these your regula-
" tors? Plague on it! I wonder not that
" you have rendered such prodigious
" services to France."—" They have
" given me a sense of discrimination of
" which you can have no idea; I am al-
" ways informed of what ought to be ad-
" mired or pulled to pieces. I never read
" a book; yet I know to a tittle what
" verdict to give when people chance to
" converse on literature. Is a work
" quoted, it is sufficient for me to en-
" quire whether it is written since the
" year 1700, and I decide, without strik-
" ing a blow, that it is detestable."—
" Even Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rous-
" seau, Helvetius, Mably?"—" What
" are they all to me? It is not my fault:
" why did they not write in the reign of
" Lewis XIV. I have never set my foot
" in the *Jardin des Plantes:* but does

" that prevent me from answering, when " Buffon is the subject of discourse, that " he was nothing but an orator, a writer " of novels. I have not yet seen the " Gallery of the Louvre: what does that " signify? Do I not know how to affirm " that the Italian school is a hundred de- " grees above the French? Is the Fle- " mish school in question, have not the " journals apprized me that Lewis XIV. " disdained it? After such an opinion, " what is the Flemish school? And that " Museum of Monuments? Is it not a " frightful thing? I know nothing of it; " but that must be the case; the journals " have said so; a hundred times I have " decided it to be so, and no one has " ventured to contradict me."—" That " is admirable. How fortunate for the " public good that there are men like " you! You are, I am certain, without " a fellow in your species. What a pity! " But for that, France would go far."—

" Without

" Without a fellow! You do me great " honour: every coffee-house in Paris " has certainly a few men who resemble " me."—" Is that true?"—" Nearly so " at least. It is certain that I have, per- " haps, a little more sagacity than ano- " ther, and this sagacity is so well exer- " cised, that not long since, on seeing, in " the *Petites Affiches*, the manner in " which an article was drawn up, signi- " fying that a young lady wanted an hus- " band, I laid a wager that she was sub- " ject to the vapours, and I guessed " right."—" What! people here adver- " tise for a wife or a husband in the news- " papers?"—" Why! where were you " born? Undoubtedly: this is done " every day: are you astonished at it?" —" What astonishes me, is that you are " not astonished at it."—" I? By no " means: nothing is more convenient " than this invention, and I remember

" the time when it was on the point of
" being brought to perfection."

" A few years ago," continued he, " I
" read in a newspaper, much in vogue
" then, the project of a man who pro-
" posed to form an establishment for im-
" proving still more this invention. He
" had, he said, just hired a magnificent
" town-house, superbly furnished, and
" distributed into elegant and conveni-
" ent apartments. His intention was to
" establish a boarding-house for young
" ladies to be married. In consideration
" of a handsome sum, they would there
" have been lodged and boarded. Three
" days in the week would have been de-
" voted to balls and concerts; the four
" others would have been occupied by
" card-parties. These young ladies
" would alone have had the right of be-
" ing admitted. His wife, he said, ac-
" customed to all the manners of the fa-
" shionable

" shionable world, would have done the
" honours of the house. Every thing
" would have been passed with the most
" rigid decorum: he would have received
" under his roof none but gentlemen
" whose fortune, education, and person,
" would have been suitable and proper;
" so that these ladies would have had
" time to know and study the charac-
" ter of the men whom, in the sequel,
" they might have honoured with their
" choice; and one of the advantages of
" his establishment would, according to
" him, have been to spare young ladies,
" for a moderate sum, the trouble of ad-
" vertising in a newspaper, and the un-
" pleasantness of waiting for an answer,
" or of repeating several times the same
" want, if those who presented themselves
" did not suit them."

Till then the oddity of this man had made me laugh; but here it petrified me. What morals! exclaimed I. What! it

was not enough that youth and beauty should, without blushing, put themselves up to auction in the periodical papers; it was also necessary that a man should found a project of acquiring a fortune on that same forgetfulness of all decorum, and conceive that it was possible to set up a market for marriage as a man would open a jeweller's shop! O laws of Hymen! so sacred among all civilized nations, you which served as a basis for the glory of Sparta, Athens, and Rome, what then are you in this country? What! the religious ideas to which that name gave birth were so deeply rooted among the ancients, that Cæsar even, who trampled under foot so many virtues, durst not set himself above the veneration due to marriage, and affirmed that his wife ought not to be suspected even; and here people are suffered to accustom themselves insensibly to negotiate that sacred tie, as if they were making a bargain for

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an estate or an house! A young girl, a young man, advertise for a wife, a husband, in the newspapers, with the same levity, what do I say? with a hundred times less precaution than either of them would employ in proceeding to make a purchase of a garden or a trinket! A young girl describes her charms in a newspaper, as a shopkeeper sets forth the agreeable properties of a piece of furniture or a garment: she dares to say: "I "have so much: I want so much." She prescribes the qualities that a man ought to bring to be the higher bidder at such an auction: she points out the age, the stature, the face, that a candidate ought to have. Is it in this manner, then, that a female disposes herself for the august obligation of being a mother, and prepares herself to obey the most sacred law of nature? And what will become of the children of a woman, who puts herself, as it were, up to sale like a slave, and who, disen-

disengaging herself from those delicate cares, the delightful preliminaries of marriage, seeks in marriage no more than a man, and not a husband? It was not thus that, in Athens, people ascended the steps of the temple of Hymen, or prepared themselves to give birth to children that might rival Aristides and Miltiades.

These reflections had so distracted my attention, that my coffee-house oracle had lost himself in the crowd without my perceiving it. I returned home in a rather melancholy mood, lamenting that in a country, in a city whose inhabitants are justly celebrated for their activity, their genius, and their spirit of invention, there should be suffered public-houses called *coffee-houses*, where a certain class of men have the right of establishing themselves during the whole day to enjoy the privilege of doing nothing for society, and where the habit of living surrounded by

by idlers of their own species has no other effect than that of chaining them to celibacy.

This day, I confess, had occasioned me a little ill humour. I had, till this moment, always thought that all those places, called *coffee-houses*, and which are met with at every step in Paris, were tolerated only for public convenience; that persons went thither in the morning to take a hasty and slight breakfast; that they repaired thither again in the evening to sip, for a few moments, the salubrious infusion of that delicious berry which our fertile Arabia furnishes to the world; and that the remainder of the day those houses were deserted. By no means. I had just learned that they were an asylum continually open to sloth, idleness, and loquacity; that a crowd of ignorant people went thither daily to listen to the decrees of a few useless dotards, like him from whom I had just parted;

parted; praters who, without any other information, without any other knowledge, without any other science than that which they had imbibed, in the course of twenty or thirty years, from the perusal of some periodical papers, made a point of discoursing on polities, of judging of the operations of governments, of pronouncing on the arts, on the theatre, on discoveries, on authors, and on taste; of sophists who added the fallaciousness of their opinion to the too habitual prepossessions of journalists, their only tutors; of indifferent beings, who had no other employment in the world than to overload their country with the weight of their useless existence, than to spread, from morning to night, false notions on men and on things, not only to idlers of their own description, whose sole occupation was to listen to them, but also to the public, whom the convenience of refreshments, always prepared for

for their wants, occasioned to enter every moment into houses of this sort. And I was at a loss to conceive how, in a well ordered state, establishments were suffered in which one portion of the company set up as a right to do nothing, in which the citizen imperceptibly lost the relish of all domestic ties, found a recreation against celibacy, the tiresomeness of which would haunt him, had he not this resource for keeping himself absent from home, and acquired a revolting selfishness from the possibility of separating himself from every thing that attaches other men, from the facility of making for himself a sort of retreat where he was neither obliged to expend nor to gain, and from the habit which he contracted of living surrounded by persons whom he neither knew, esteemed, nor cherished.

But this is not the sole inconvenience of coffee-houses: the liberty which one there

there enjoys, the liquors which are there distributed, the yoke of restraint and decorum which is there never felt, the games which are there allowed, attract, retain, and confine young men; and the time which they should devote to study, to the exercises necessary for their age, for the frequentation of proper and select company, of their family even, is there entirely thrown away. There are some quarters of Paris where these coffee-houses are the haunts of debauchery; where the ear is shocked by discordant music; where the eyes are disgusted by the aspect of the most filthy prostitutes; where the air is infected by the presence of robbers, spies, pickpockets, and all the populace of houses of ill fame; and where licentiousness, reigning with sovereign sway, invites young men, laughs at their inexperience, perverts their morals, inculcates in them the germ of vices which they would never have known, releases

releases them, in a short time, from the embarrassment of blushing, dries up in its source the hope of an honest family, effaces all the elements of a good education, and condemns sometimes to opprobrium a life from which the country expected useful and happy fruits. If man, arrived at the age when he is ashamed of errors, at the age when it is so difficult to repair them, would be sincere, he would say that it is from the first moment when he set his foot in a coffee-house that he began to experience a distaste for labour, a dislike to good company, and an indifference in regard to his future state; that it was in a coffee-house he met with the first companions who emboldened him to enter on irregularities, the first courtesan whose acquaintance destroyed his health and fortune, the first debauchees who familiarized him with libertinism, intoxication, and prodigality; that it was in a coffee-

coffee-house he felt the first impulse of a passion for gaining, that he procured himself the first disgraceful resources for repairing his losses, that he met with the first usurers who sold him his ruin at an exorbitant price; that he braved, perhaps, the last efforts of his reason for delivering him from the commission of crimes.

Coffee-houses, however, are of no very ancient date among them. It is somewhat extraordinary that when the human species is incessantly aiming at improvement, an evil genius should, as it were, take a pleasure in placing constantly beside it some novelty that retards its progress. A hundred years ago their forefathers still went to the public-house. At the present day a well-bred man would blush to appear there; yet the public-houses which their forefathers frequented were less indecorous, less dangerous, both in regard to health and morals. Was wine, the only liquor drank there, as preju-

prejudicial as those perfumed *liqueurs*, rendered poisonous by spirits of wine, which are distributed in coffee-houses? People went thither with their friends only; they did not mix with unknown persons; they did not find themselves in contact with strangers from every part of the world; and if vices found their way into them, they were confined to their own coterie, and were not communicated to decent persons who sometimes came thither to relax from the occupations of the day, since such was the custom of those times. Frenchmen no longer go to the public-house: this is not a great evil; it would be a good even had not this custom been replaced by one more vicious. They no longer go thither for this important reason, because their forefathers did: it should seem that, in their eyes, it is a virtue not to do what was done by their forefathers. If one talks to them of a fashion,

shion, a custom, or an amusement, their common answer is, "Fye! fye! that might suit my grandfather." They would consider themselves as dishonoured in adopting the conduct of those to whom they owe their birth. It would be no easy matter to calculate how hurtful this rage of never wishing to resemble their forefathers has been to the morals of the French. To change is not to improve. The coffee-houses are better ornamented, more brilliant, and more elegant, no doubt, than the public-houses were: they are decorated with mirrors, lustres, busts, and pictures.

The masters and mistresses of a coffee-house are dressed out like persons in the possession of fifty thousand livres a year when they receive company; the numerous waiters employed are so many *petits-maîtres*; in point of figure, dress, and foppery, they dispute the palm with the first-rate *wonderfuls*, or beaux of the day.

lay. The public-houses, unquestionably, presented none of this delicacy; but a man came out sometimes in a mirthful mood, and always honest, from a public-house; and he comes out sometimes vicious, and always melancholy, from a coffee-house. By this change luxury alone has gained; while morals have lost: when we improve that only which was already an imperfection in society, it is not advancing, it is retrograding. If one passes through a street, if one takes a walk on the *Boulevards*, the eye, undoubtedly, is amused by the brilliant show of these coffee-houses, at the bustle of the crowd pressing round their doors either to enter or quit them; at the grotesque and silly figure of the admiring auditors of those inharmonious orchestras; at the lures of those women whose imposture promises connexions as fallacious as their attractions; at the inconsiderateness of those youths who, through malice

malice or raillery, begin with them a conversation continued by weakness, and terminated by delirium; at the coarse and factitious gaiety of those citizens led thither by the Sunday vogue, distinguished by their loud laughter, and whose jokes, applauded in the course of the evening, will furnish matter of recollection for all the week; at the caricature of those old men, whose ancient and diurnal visits are attested by the worn-out state of the benches on which they are seated, and whom the walls of these coffee-houses have seen insensibly sink under the weight of habit and inutility. But if the eye is amused, the heart is oppressed. How many men lost, and how many losing themselves! In making this reflection, how much fewer are the alarms which the noisy and ingenuous mirth of a public-house communicates to the imagination! Consumption, it is said, gains by this: certainly, there must be

be a reason, since it is suffered; but is it really rational, that the public treasury should be enriched, and morals impoverished?

LETTER XXIV.

PARIS possesses three magnificent establishments. I wish, my dear Giafar, that thou couldst inspect them with me; thy heart, thy mind, and thy eyes, would at once be gratified. These three establishments are the MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, the CENTRAL MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, and the NATIONAL LIBRARY: in the first are to be found all the wonders of nature; in the second, all the wonders of painting and sculpture; and in the third, all the wonders of thought committed to paper. The first contains every thing most rich and most rare that the three kingdoms of nature have produced: the trees, the flowers, the fruits of the four quarters of the world are assembled, grow, and thrive in a magnificent garden. There, thanks

thanks to the industrious genius of this nation, art has created an eternal spring for the tender productions of the banks of the Ganges and the Indus: there, in the depth of winter, vegetables, born on the burning shores of Gambia, of the Nile, and of the Amazons, find again the fiery climate which gave them birth. Hygeia there reaps, in all their vigour, the balmy plants with which nature clothed the surface of the globe for the relief of unfortunate mortals: there, all the woods which luxury employs, all the plants which delicacy holds in request, all the seeds which are combined by the dyer, cover the ground, enchant the sight, and perfume the air. The timid antelope and the enormous elephant, the harmless sheep and the ferocious tiger, the swift stag and the indolent bear, the peaceful goat and the proud lion, the eagle and the dove, the colibri and the vulture, the snowy swan and the

nocturnal owl, live under the same sky, and inhabit the same asylum.

Let us enter this splendid repository: the treasures of numerous oceans, the varied inhabitants of the air, of the earth, and of the water, from the whale to the polypus, from the condor to the humming-bird, all the riches concealed in the bowels of the globe, from gold to lead, from the brilliant diamond to the simple flint, from porphyry to sandstone, display, under glazed receptacles, their polished surfaces and the lustre of their rays, their wealthy pomp, and their variegated exterior. There, too, the desire of study is really to be remarked. It seems that the presence of nature has an imposing effect on young men led thither by the want of instruction; a sort of affecting melancholy is spread over their features; the giddiness of youth is less characterized, their countenance is serene; their eye, meditative; their aspect, religious.

gious. The public even, who are attracted by curiosity, lose that noisy, tumultuous, inconsiderate, and indiscreet agitation which follows them into the other establishments of science or of the arts. It might be said, that the manners of men are softened as soon as they enter the JARDIN DES PLANTES, for thus is called this Botanical Garden: or, perhaps, might it not be that, in order to experience the desire of seeing and frequenting this beautiful spot, they must have none but soft passions, and that the portion of society there met with, is that whose morals are the most pure, whose soul is most tender, and whose heart is most feeling? Or let us rather say that this is the finest temple which man has erected on earth in honour of nature, and that if he there placed the altar of the mother of all beings, every thing there ought to partake of his filial piety. What sublime

interpreters of the miracles and laws of that beneficent nature have inhabited, and enriched this spot! What great men still cultivate her productions! The ashes of some, the discourses of others; what subjects to command respect! what recollections!

I confess, Giafar, I have not experienced a sentiment so delicious in visiting their magnificent libraries. They have several; the one most deserving of admiration is that which they call the NATIONAL LIBRARY, an immense tomb of the genius of twenty centuries. There sleep errors of every description. The heart aches at the recollection: one of these books has, perhaps, caused more blood to be shed than the heroic madness of ten conquerors. The first time I entered this proud monument of learning, "How great is man!" said to me the person by whom I was conducted: "What bold adventurer would dare to

"measure

" measure the genius of the human spe-
" cies?"—" How little is man!" said I to myself: " What rash being would " flatter himself with being able to mea-
" sure all the extent of his weakness?" —Millions of books, and still passions, still truth called in question, justice without credit, and wisdom contested! Sixteen hundred thousand volumes, and not a virtue more on earth! A man in the midst of these extensive libraries! What a sight! There is displayed, under the eye of that wretch, every thing by which he was surrounded to become a better man. What does he bring? Nothing; his hands are empty.

A profound silence reigns under these extended arches. What a number of men, every day, seated round long tables! They read, write, and meditate. Are they sages? Some are, perhaps, but very few; all the rest are drudges, copyists, and compilers: they are there as if in a

warehouse of dresses: they come to seek, among the spoils of the dead, a garb for clothing their incapacity. Sometimes, too, they are speculators on human malignity: they dig up the malevolence of past ages: they revive it, and resel it to the malevolence of their own times. Sometimes it is still worse: like dangerous quacks, they collect poisons, and pave the way to the death of generations. Ah! Giafar! let us be gone; the aspect of these indefatigable compilers, and that inconceivable heap of books, affect me. Hast thou seen, the day after a battle, birds of prey hover over an immense field where lie piles of corpses? Such are these compilers: the same instinct, the same voracity. When in festivals or public ceremonies I contemplate those crowds of people by which the streets, the public squares, and gardens, are thronged; among all those men, say I to myself, how few, perhaps, are there whom

whom I would wish to honour with the name of friend! A library and this crowd is to me the same thing.

I am fond of their CENTRAL MUSEUM OF THE ARTS. I have seen thy looks surveying with complacence the enormous remains of the ancient people of Egypt: well! Thebes, Memphis, Alexandria, possessed not, perhaps, a monument to be compared to this: figure to thyself a gallery of fourteen hundred feet in length, the colossal junction of two colossal palaces, a gallery whose walls, thirty feet in elevation, are covered with the most magnificent pictures, which, for four hundred years past, have issued from the hand of man. Thus, thou seest that it is a superficies of two thousand eight hundred feet, entirely covered with master-pieces; master-pieces, that is the term; for the delicacy of these Frenchmen, their refined taste, and their national pride, so flattered by the import-

ance of this monument, which has no parallel on earth, have not suffered any picture of a secondary degree of merit to find its way into this sanctuary of the arts.

Three nations of Europe have rendered themselves illustrious in the art of painting: the Italian, the French, and the Flemish or Dutch. The Europeans distinguish them by the name of school, and they say, Italian school, French school, and Flemish school. Of these three schools, the Italian alone has its subdivisions; thus, they say Lombard school, Florentinè school, Roman school, Venetian school, &c.; and these differ among themselves as much as the Italian school, properly so called, differs from the French and the Flemish. In general, these three schools are known by very distinctive characteristics: the Italian, by purity of design and beauty of execution; the French, from wisdom of arrange-

arrangement, grandeur of composition, and truth of expression; the Flemish, by magic of *colour*, delicacy of pencilling, and an exact imitation of nature. As long as each of these three nations possessed within itself the whole, as it were, of its capital productions, they disputed with each other for pre-eminence, and this grand contest remained undecided. At the present day, when all the pieces worthy of comparison are brought together, the question is settled: and the French school, which the Italians pretended to cry down so much beneath their own, has resumed its rank, and is, by the French at least, considered as its equal. Some people still affect to say that the decree is not given, and reason as if that was the case. This is a remnant of prejudice; for there are prejudices among painters as among other men. Those whom the mechanism of art attaches or seduces more than the

genius displayed in a production of this same art, still contend for the Italian school; but sentiment contradicts them, and it is sentiment above all that must be relied on in the arts. When a man who knows how to reflect, surveys the GALLERY OF THE LOUVRE, and sees the Italian master-pieces by the side of the French *chef-d'œuvres*, he endeavours to account to himself for that superiority which opinion has almost always granted to the former. I see, by the habit which I have contracted of studying the human heart, that the Italians, notwithstanding their excessive vanity, have been the dupe of the secret vanity of the artists of other nations, and that opinion has been formed from that by which precisely it ought to have been stifled. Before I explain this idea, I must give you an account of the questions which I have put to myself. I asked myself, What quality first merits most esteem in

in a production of art? Unquestionably, it is genius, or, to speak less vaguely, it is the first thought, or, if you please, the creation of thought. The first subject that occurs inspires that thought. Ten painters shall treat this same subject: if, in these ten pictures, I seek for thought, that which shall present to me the grandest, the truest, and the most just, will be that in which I shall discover the man of genius. Therefore genius is the first thing necessary to be possessed. The next is expression; for the question is not simply to conceive well, a painter must also know how to express, that is, make others understand what he has conceived. Afterwards comes harmony; for it is not sufficient to express well partially, all the parts, or (if I may use the expression) the phrases of a picture, must perfectly correspond, and be perfectly connected with each other; they must be comma'd and stopped suitably

suitably in the sense which is peculiar to them; they must possess strength, eloquence, elevation, elegance, softness, and simplicity, relative to the place they occupy: and here I do not understand by harmony what is meant by painters; I mean harmony of sentiment in the proceeding. Next the design. There begins mechanism: every thing that precedes it, is not learned; they are favours which nature lavishes more or less on mankind. Design then. Next perspective, disposition of shades, the skill of reflections, the melting of colours, and the quackery of fine pencilling. In order to produce a master-piece, acknowledged such by the whole society of men well organized, there must be an assemblage of the gifts granted by nature and those of the mechanism acquired by study. To produce a master-piece in the eyes of men of genius, the first part of these requisite qualities is sufficient. To produce a master-

master-piece in the eyes of painters, or at least of certain painters, frequently nothing more is necessary than the second, that is to say, mechanism.

Let us now open the human heart, and read: What does man esteem in a superior degree in every species of creation? Genius. If genius is the object of this supreme admiration, to whom does he grant the faculty in a superior degree? To himself in the first instance. Thus proceeds vanity. In making of this thesis a particular application, I shall, I suppose, take a painter, however celebrated, up to a picture as fine as can be imagined. I am even willing that the author of this picture should be present, that all the public should be there, if that can be so managed, to hear the opinion which this painter will pronounce. What will he praise? What will he exalt? The purity, the correctness of the design; the beauty, the noble-

bleness,

bleness, and the proportion of the forms; the knowledge of anatomy, the manner in which the muscles are inserted, in which the members are attached, in which the interior structure is represented; the truth of the flesh, the truth of the position, the truth of the drapery; the rapidity of the touch, the science of the pallet; in a word, every thing that is comprised in that technical word *le faire,* or the mechanic. And of genius? Not a word. Why? Because, as I mentioned just now, this judge will tacitly presume himself far superior to the man, in this branch, on whose picture he shall come to pass sentence; that, in consequence, he will, infallibly, disdain to speak of that which he may have discovered in this picture, and that he will admire only that which he knows very well every man may learn to execute, if he is born with the dispositions necessary for that trade; for painting without genius is no more than

a trade.

a trade. It is, however, according to this constant progress of the human heart, and of the pride which rules it, that the pretended supremacy of the Italian school has been established. Consequently, the French, or other foreign artists, in Italy, have never failed, for three hundred years past, to exalt in the Italian pictures every thing that constitutes the trade of painting; because, in fact, this part is admirable in them; but they never scarcely said a word of the genius of their authors, either for the reason which I have just mentioned, or because, in the greater number of those pictures, genius has been very little exerted. The Italian painters, on their side, in examining the pictures of the French school, have not praised with the same enthusiasm mechanism properly so called, because it is, perhaps, less perfect: but, being as proud, and prouder than all other men, they have kept a silence

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which possessed a superiority of *genius*. Besides, this great lustre of Italy, and even of Flanders, has been terribly eclipsed within the last hundred years; both those schools no longer produce any thing deserving of commendation. Truth requires it to be likewise mentioned that, for two-thirds of the last century, the French school had fallen still lower; but it has suddenly risen again with extraordinary vigour, and it has at the present day, from the men it possesses, reached a point which was neither surpassed by Italy nor Flanders in their most happy days. In fact, there are at this moment, in Europe, none but the French who can boast of great men in the art of painting. Italy still makes a few efforts in sculpture; but, in truth, the ridiculous rage of the French for admiring every thing that is not French is of wonderful service to the Italians in that pretension, and I often laugh to hear,

hear, in the middle of Paris, and in the very ears of the best French sculptors, the epithet of celebrated given, lavished on sorry stone-masons, all whose merit lies in bearing an ultramontane name; and to see brought at a great expense, for decorating the cabinets of some pretended amateurs, the mishapen productions wrought by Italian chisels, and which the most unskilful pupil of the French sculptors would blush to own, and still more to exhibit.

Independently of the admirable gallery of which I have spoken to thee farther back, there is another in the same palace, not so long, but equally magnificent, which is called *The Gallery of Apollo.* Hitherto, the latter has served only for the exhibition of drawings. These drawings flatter less the curiosity of the public, but they are dear to men of genius; being almost always the first thought of the greatest masters, they are,

as it were, the flash, the electric spark which the first idea of a subject has suddenly caused to be emitted from their brain. This gallery is a great treasure. On the ground-floor, and beneath this gallery of Apollo, are seen the superb halls where are to be admired the masterpieces of ancient sculpture. Such, Giafar, is the aggregate of this immense monument of the arts. This monument is very fine, very astonishing, and worthy of admiration. I have already told thee so; it flatters their national pride: they are not to be blamed for this sentiment; it is the finest trophy of their victories.

For twenty-five or thirty years past, the inspiration of nature, the progress of taste, the attention bestowed by enlightened travellers on the vestiges of antiquity, the discoveries made by searching the bowels of the earth, in short, that certain invisible power which gives birth to particular epochs for rendering nations illustrious,

illustrious, had given a great impulse to their genius for the arts. The incredible collection of riches which this Museum has all at once presented to their view, has considerably increased this impulse. Formerly, they sent their pupils to study in Italy. In order to judge of their progress, it was required that they should thence bring back copies of some pictures. Fatal prejudice! Dangerous habit! In the arts to copy, is to condemn students to mediocrity. They must see, and imbibe great ideas: INVENT, AND THOU SHALT LIVE. They persist, however, in still sending their young men to Rome. But may they understand me! Let them copy no more. Let them enjoy the climate, the sites, and the air; let them survey the ruins of temples and palaces; let them penetrate themselves with every thing noble that such enjoyment and such contemplation can inspire; but let them never copy: then they will be artists.

artists. I think that this truth begins to strike them. I observe here their most celebrated masters; I never surprise them in this Museum with a pencil in their hand; yet they come hither: they walk about, stop, look in silence, and retire. When they withdraw, their head is loaded with divine spoils; for their step is religiously solemn.

However, to see that crowd of men surrounded by pencils and pallets, chained all day to those numerous easels scattered throughout this gallery, the superficial observer would imagine that all these people devote themselves to the study of painting. This is an error: they are workmen more or less skilful; that is all. They are makers of copies, some indifferent, which they sell for a little money: well and good; others, very fine, which are resold in foreign countries as originals; this is a great evil.

This fine Museum is open on certain days to the curiosity of the people: this

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is very well; it is a homage to their majesty. But the people should pay homage for homage. From the manner in which they present themselves here, sometimes it is easy to discover that, if the arts feel the dignity of the people, the people feel not always the dignity of the arts. This publicity is frequently no more than prostitution. This Museum is the property of the people: agreed; but it is the property of their greatness. They are not sufficiently taught, methinks, that when they penetrate into a public establishment, they appear before their power. What does the Museum recal to their mind? The glory and the blood of their fathers. If they visited their graves, would they not approach them with a meditative countenance? Why do they lay it aside in surveying places where their immortality is written on all the walls?

The French are really proud of this sublime monument. But how can so much

much indifference be allied to that noble pride? O Giafar! thou who, perhaps, at the very moment when I am writing to thee, standing motionless and pensive on the ruins of Alexandria, art seeking with an afflicted eye the place where rose that monument so dear to the pride of the Ptolemies, that vast repository of the understanding of the past and of the hope of the future: thou who, no doubt, dost curse the barbarous element whose fury devoured so many riches, wouldst thou believe that these Frenchmen suffer, within a few paces of a monument whose loss would still be more irreparable, all the elements of combustion? Its north façade is separated only by a narrow street, from wretched and filthy habitations; whose miserable, disgusting, and shapeless aspect conceals on that side the beautiful prolongation of the architecture of this gallery. But this is little: what are, Giafar, the inhabitants of these

houses? Publicans, bakers, grocers, and oilmen; persons, in short, whose trade employs none but combustible matters, whose cellars, courts, and warehouses are filled with liquors, faggots, brandy, and turpentine; what do I say? with a thousand ingredients which a spark might kindle, the conflagration of which would, in an instant, consume that heap of houses, almost all constructed of dry wood, and the flame of which, driven by the slightest wind from the north-west, north, or north-east, would, with the rapidity of lightning, clear a space of less than twenty feet, extending its spread, without any obstacle, over this gallery, the repository of so many riches, which all the treasures of the world would not suffice to pay for, and which all the talents of man would never succeed in replacing. And it is a monument, to which the genius of so many ages brought its tribute; a monument, of which an account is due

to

to all polished nations; a monument, the possession of which calls to France the curious persons from all parts of the world; renders, by its unheard of magnificence, all countries tributary to the French, and occasions, perhaps, three millions of livres to be imported from foreign funds and thrown into circulation, that is thus left to the mercy of events! I confess that this reflection petrifies me, and that I do not conceive how it is possible, when men are so worthy of possessing this wonder without a parallel in the world, by their greatness, their power, their genius, and by that sublime elevation which victory, talents, understanding, and virtues have given them over most other nations, should debase themselves by a shameful indifference which would scarcely be excused in the most barbarous hordes.

But where am I? O happy day! day of supreme felicity! a letter from thee!

Giafar

Giafar in France! Giafar escorting my father! O my friends! O most beloved of my heart! I set off, I fly; I shall be at Marseilles before you have quitted its walls; and may joy not have cut short my days before I find myself in your arms.

THE END.

NOTES.

Page 3.—The frivolity and giddiness of the French is such, that seldom do they give themselves the time or the trouble to examine more than the exterior or dress of a person they meet with. His manner of presenting himself, and the taste in the choice, colour, or the cuff of his coat, decide alone, in their opinion, that he is a man of sense, education, or consequence; whilst an unfashionable dress and modest or timid behaviour condemn the man to be good for little or nothing. Some authors, who have written upon the causes of the revolution, go so far as to pretend that the duke of Orleans conspired by his Anglomania of introducing the English plainness of dress in France, and by an equality of dress, made his vain countrymen forget, disregard, or despise inequality of rank, and who therefore some years afterwards changed the fashionable equality into a political one.

It is a fact which many travellers must have experienced in France, that if they condescended to join in familiar conversation or society with Frenchmen inferior to themselves by birth or in circumstances, those would soon think themselves equals, if

if not superiors, and disgust by their impertinence or presumption.

Since France was decreed a commonwealth, the modern republicans changed plainness of dress into total neglect of all dress; unpowdered heads, dirty linen, long beards, a coat full of dust, or only a jacket with pantaloons in rags, and mended or worn-out shoes, constituted the fashionable dress of the patriotic sansculottes, and sansculotte patriots, during the reign of terror, both under the National Convention, and in some periods under the Directory. A decent dress and language, a clean face and shirt, were titles of suspicion, if not of proscription, as appertaining to aristocrats or Muscadins; and in those days of Vandalism the coats of many brought the wearers to the scaffold.

As soon as Buonaparte was seated upon the throne of the Bourbons, he decreed a distinct dress for each person, from the senator down to the lowest clerk or attendant in the public offices—from the general down to the drummer in the army. This visible distinction in dress was very political, and contributed not a little to accustom French citizens to regard and respect the necessary distance between the so necessary and unavoidable inequality of conditions: the proud, presumptuous, and insolent French character particularly demanded this measure. Buonaparte besides

sides supports the fashion of elegant dresses, that the man of property may be distinguished from the sansculottes; the man of birth and taste from the low and ignorant. The manner of dress, with embroidery, &c. as is now prevalent in Buonaparte's republic, nearly resembles the customs and accoutrements of the French people at the period when Louis XVI. succeeded Louis XV. to the throne. This good and unambitious prince encouraged an economy and simplicity in dress so corresponding with his own character and notions; and therefore, by his example, and that of his queen and of his court, assisted not a little the duke of Orleans, if he had abilities to foresee or intent to prepare a change in the political principles from a change of the external dress and accoutrements.

Page 46.—The number of duels in France have since the revolution increased with the number of its officers and soldiers, of its national guards and conscripts. It was no rare occurrence in all the garrison towns, where in 1790 the troops of the line did duty with the national volunteers, to see or to hear of duelling parties of one or two hundred persons of the different corps, of which the origin was often the better dress of the latter, and the better manœuvres of the former. Since the same dress makes no longer any distinction, and the same brigade makes them all equal in tactics, it is become a custom to try the valour of the conscripts

conscripts by repeated duels, which always cost the lives of a number of citizens. It was reported lately in the papers of three hundred conscripts duelling with the same number of veterans at Strasburgh, of whom near four hundred were left upon the spot or carried to the hospitals. *A bon mot*, as the French call it, or a stroke of wit, often brings numbers to the grave. In 1799 the 19th demi-brigade met with the 77th in Italy, when a soldier of the former happened to say in a joke to a soldier of the latter, that No. 77 upon his bonnet resembled two gibbets, which caused a duel, and afterwards became an affair of honour between the two brigades, and upwards of two hundred and fifty were killed on both sides. In 1801 these brigades met again at Lyons, and during forty-eight hours near two hundred more perished from the same cause. At Paris, and in its neighbourhood, the Bois *de Boulogne*, every day a number of duels take place; and parties here rendezvous to fight as to act or dance together. Within this last year even ladies have begun to fight with pistols. In May, 1802, a Madame Deunaigly fought and wounded with a pistol a Madame de Tourville, whom she accused of having seduced her lover. As to the author's wish that the French ladies would by indifference discourage duelling, the revolution has as much accustomed them to sights of blood as the men, and the vanity of one sex is as great as that of the other.

Not-

Not long ago a beautiful French actress made it a condition of surrender to a young man who courted her, that he should fight a duel for her with a person with whom she was offended. She dictated the challenge, but wrote herself the address, and kept her lover in suspense until the appointed hour, when she accompanied him to the Bois de Boulogne. But what was the young man's surprise when he met his own father, and this female fury forced him by upbraiding, and enticed him by love, to draw his sword against the author of his existence. Fortunately some persons passed by, interfered, and prevented perhaps a parricide. This anecdote being reported to the police, the lady was *punished* by not being permitted to appear upon the stage for one decade. She is now the mistress of one of the first Parisian bankers. The last Paris papers illustrate what has been said with the following:

"*Nov.* 3, 1803. Two soldiers of the Parisian guard repaired to the *Champs Elysées*, to fence with sabres. They were naked down to the waist; and every blow, if not parried, might cut the one on whom it fell into two pieces. Who were the spectators? Women of the first fashion and elegance, with robes trimmed with gold and silver—women who would faint at the sight of a mouse, or a piece of cheese. Fortunately for one of the combatants whose blood began to flow, an officer interfered by his authority, and saved his life."

Page 99.—Among the forty thousand laws, decreed, improved, corrected, or changed, since the revolution in France, not one punishes cruelty towards animals; and the common amusement for children in the French republic, particularly those of large cities and towns, is to torment, teize, or kill the often useful, and always innocent, domestic animals. It is no uncommon sight in the streets of Paris, Bourdeaux, &c. to see children of both sexes amuse themselves by cutting up alive dogs or cats, to find out in what manner puppies and kittens are produced in the wombs of their mothers, and for which they are often applauded by their parents, relatives, and citizens who happen to pass and witness this early unfeelingness and atrocity. Many of the horrors of the revolution can perhaps, at least in part, be ascribed to the abominable usage of permitting the French youth to accustom themselves to sights of blood and suffering; a boy who at the age of ten sees not only with indifference, but with pleasure, an innocent animal expire under his hands, at twenty cannot but care little either to pierce the heart of a man, or to cut up alive a dog.

Page 149.—In every street, upon every bridge, square, or other public places at Paris, are numerous fortune-tellers, who, by paying a trifle to the police, are permitted to live by imposition, and by deceiving simplicity, ignorance, or curiosity. In telling fortunes, and predicting what shall happen,

pen, in their printed answers are always found some numbers for the national lottery; and as in France this lottery is drawn every second day all the year long, the immoral French government profits by the imposture of the fortune-tellers, because nobody consults them who does not trust to their answers, and look upon the numbers they receive as destined by a great prize to finish all their troubles. The many changes the French people have witnessed these last fifteen years, when so many obscure persons have ascended to power, and so many beggars become men of immense properties, cause them to believe every thing not only probable but possible. The republican lottery is besides calculated to swallow up the riches of a banker as well as the scanty gain of a day-labourer or mechanic, because tickets may be had from ten sous (five pence) to a million of livres or forty thousand pounds. These fortune-tellers swarm over all France as at Paris; every city, town, and village, is infested with them. Most of these men are spies to the police, and have figured as judges or legislators in the former revolutionary tribunals or committees. The infamous Fourbé, when a minister of police, organised this corps of *privileged and protected republican impostors*.

Page 230.—Since the French republican laws have made divorces so fashionable and easy, and

corruption

corruption and vice have succeeded modesty and virtue, French citizens of both sexes advertise for partners to the altar of Hymen with the same, if not greater *nonchalance* than they announce that they want to buy a horse or to hire a servant. Not only the PETITES AFFICHES, that are printed every morning in twenty-four pages, grand octavo, and contain nothing but advertisements, are full of demands and offers for marriages, but near the corner of every street, and at the doors of every theatre, coffee-house, tavern, and public-house, are posted up Grand Affiches, where women of eighty, girls of fourteen, men of ninety, and boys of fifteen, indicate their desire of entering upon matrimony, in which the old acknowledge fortune to be their principal quality, and the young praise their beauty, vigour, or temper. According to Mercier, since newspapers procured old maids husbands, and the municipality divorced them, upwards of thirty thousand virgins past forty have emigrated from the provinces to Paris, and have met with success, though at the expence of fortunes. There is, besides, in the Rue St. Denis, a BUREAUX DES MARIAGES, where, for three livres, indicatives are given—both for husbands and wives.

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